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## THE ROMANCES OF THE PRESIDENTS







MARTHA DANDRIDGE CUSTIS WASHINGTON  
(*Mrs. George Washington*)

# THE ROMANCES OF THE PRESIDENTS

By

BESSIE WHITE SMITH

*Author of "The Boyhoods of the Presidents"*

ILLUSTRATED FROM PORTRAITS AND PRINTS



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THE ROMANCES OF THE PRESIDENTS

*Dedicated*  
*To the memory of my most beloved friend,*  
*IDA DONNALLY PETERS*



## PREFACE

No matter what a man may accomplish in a lifetime, all the world wants to know if he was ever a lover. Indeed, so interesting are the love stories of great men that the men themselves are almost universally measured by the fire of these romances. Therefore, the aim of this book is to present the fine bits of sentiment that blossomed into ruling passions in the lives of our national leaders.

The thirty sketches that make up this work are the result of an untiring research among hundreds of volumes: old letters, diaries, histories, biographies; and monthly, weekly, and daily periodicals. The author acknowledges her appreciation and enjoyment of these writings; and in this book she has tried to make the men and women live again as vividly as others made them live for her.

How well the undertaking has been accomplished, of course, is not for her to say. She can only hope that readers may find some of the interest, the beauty, and the nobility in these lives that have inspired and thrilled her. No son or daughter of America should be ignorant of the splendid historical experiences of their national ancestors, who by their virtues stamped their influence upon the era in which they lived, and became benefactors of all the succeeding generations of this great Republic they helped to build.

It is with great pleasure and gratitude that the writer expresses her sincere thanks to the following people for their able assistance in research and suggestion: her husband, Cadwallader G. Smith, Mrs. Mary LeMasurier, Miss Coralie H. Johnston, reference librarian at the Virginia State Library, and her assistants; Miss Ethel I. Nolin, assistant librarian at the Richmond Public Library, and her associates in the reference department. To these are to be added: the Mawson Editorial School, of Wellesley; Mr. David E. Roberts, acting chief of the Fine Arts Division of the Library of Congress, and last, but not least, Miss N. Florence Leech and Miss Bessie Gill.

BESSIE WHITE SMITH.

*Richmond, Virginia.*

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## THE ROMANCES OF THE PRESIDENTS



# THE ROMANCES OF THE PRESIDENTS

## CHAPTER I

### GEORGE WASHINGTON

(1789-1797)

It is hard to visualize our first President as a lover. History has a way of discarding all human feelings from the lives of its great men; it makes them leaders of commanding figures and super-human powers, and thinks it has done its duty. The faults and feelings "that make the whole world kin" and should be the largest factor in hero-building are left out of the structure.

From history one can readily see the tall, spare, unformed youth who was Washington at sixteen, smashing through the unbroken forest with his ardent engineering zeal; or facing the savage foe with cool defiance; or as an awkward, gaunt boy with too big hands and feet before that proud nobleman, Lord Fairfax, who sent him on the famous Valley Survey in 1747. Again, we feel his dumb nervousness as we read of him when making his first appearance in the House of Burgesses; and we sympathize with him in his agitation over those words of the elegant and courteous Mr. Speaker Roberson, which have become an American classic: "Mr. Washing-

ton, your modesty equals your valor, and that surpasses the power of any language I possess!"

One can easily picture him as a young soldier, a great soldier, in buff and blue; "the hero of American Independence," and he towers, too, above his peers in the Continental Congress at Philadelphia in 1774. "A military leader, majestic President, cordial host, thrifty farmer, and considerate husband, but—lover?" Mrs. Sally Nelson Robins in her *Love Stories of Famous Virginians* says that it does not seem compatible. And it is hard for this generation to conceive of this man, with all his other marvelous characteristics, prone at the feet of some fair eighteenth-century maiden.

Still, from his letters there can be no doubt of Washington's susceptibility to feminine charms from a very early age. These writings portray that he loved often and unhappily; that unhappiness probably motivating his unsurpassed career.

One Frances Alexander is the subject of the first recorded affair of Washington's heart, and we learn of that only through an acrostic which he made for her when he was a boy of fifteen. Very little is known of this Frances beyond the possible fact that she was a member of the family of Alexanders who owned a plantation near Mount Vernon. "If more were known," says one writer, "perhaps we should have a boyish idyl, fresh and quaint enough to create a pastel of sentiment." But of the face and form of Frances Alexander we have no description; biography gives only her name, and the memorial acrostic, penned by the boy of transcending destiny, alone attests to this, his earliest love. It opens by telling,

“ From your bright, sparkling eyes I was undone,”  
and closes with,

“ Xerxes that great, wasn’t free from Cupid’s Dart,  
And all the greatest Heroes felt the smart.”

And the succession of damsels by whose “ sparkling eyes ” Washington was “ undone ” proved Mr. Paul Leicester Ford’s statement correct, that there was no doubt of his having a warm heart for the ladies—  
“ especially good-looking ones.”

Soon after he was fifteen, he seems to have forgotten the heroine of the acrostic, and “ the mythe of the ‘ Low Land Beauty,’ ” appears in history and biography. “ Mythe ” is used advisedly, as it is not known who the “ Low Land Beauty ” really is. Some think it was Betsy Fauntleroy or Lucy Grymes. Both were Tidewater belles whose fathers owned plantations in that tract of land extending from the Rappahannock River to the Potomac River, which was the stronghold of American society at that time.

According to tradition, Betsy Fauntleroy went in a smarter set than did young Washington. She was a descendant of Moore Fauntleroy, who was so temperamental that he was suspended from the House of Burgesses. He afterward took a very high hand in dealing with the chiefs of various Indian tribes. Betsy was pretty and charming, so it is said, and she had many suitors, one of whom, Thomas Adams, took her rejection so to heart that he left the country for England when she married the master of Bremon on the James, Bowler Cocks. Adams remained in England until Cocks died, then he returned to America and wooed Betsy again, with a happier

ending. Lucy Grymes regarded Washington's love-making lightly as she was a relative of no great "remove." She was the daughter of Charles Grymes of Grymesby, in Middlesex County, situated on the Plankatank "where the bullfrogs leap from bank to bank."

At seventeen, Washington was a resident for a winter at "Belvoir," the home of his friend, young George William Fairfax, who married the beautiful and charming Sarah Cary. She was the daughter of the wealthy and influential Wilson Cary of Ceelys on the James River, and when she was married to Fairfax she exchanged the luxuries of Ceelys for the splendor of Belvoir on the Potomac. It was in this lovely lady that George Washington met the grand passion of his life.

He had barely entered the formative years of his youth, and it is quite certain that until this time Washington had never associated intimately with such a woman; for besides Sarah Cary Fairfax's great beauty, she possessed a fine mind, enriched and embellished, under her father's supervision, with the best literature of the day.

A sketch of her at that time shows a slight figure of eighteen. A coquettish, challenging smile lights up a high-bred face surrounded by dark curls, which are parted in soft waves above a broad, low brow. Level dark eyes, fringed by long dark lashes, are set wide apart, and look on the world with frank cordiality. Beautifully slender hands with tapering fingers lightly interlaced over the folds of a full rich frock suggest every tradition laid down by the old masters for their women of noble birth.

And Sally was noble, warm-hearted, and true. The lovely bloom of her girlhood was still budding into a lovelier bloom of womanhood when she met Washington. There is an old story, Mrs. Sally Nelson Robins says, to the effect that Washington had been Sarah Cary's suitor before she married Fairfax; that he had gone boldly to Ceelys and asked her father for her hand, when he was but a poor lad. "No!" thundered the wealthy aristocrat. "If that is your mission here, sir, you may as well order your horse. My daughter has been accustomed to her coach and six."

According to that story, Sally was very probably the "Low Land Beauty" referred to in a letter written by Washington to a youthful friend addressed as "Dear Robin," shortly after he took up his residence for the winter at Belvoir. He wrote that Mrs. Fairfax's sister was visiting at Belvoir, "a very agreeable young lady," and he went on to say that being in company with her revived his former passion "for your Low Land Beauty. Whereas were I to live more retired from Women, I might alleviate my sorrow by burying that chaste and troubled passion in the grave of oblivion."

There is also a romantic connection of his name with that of Miss Mary Philipse, whom he met in New York when he was twenty-four. She was a sister-in-law of his cousin, Beverly Roberson, and she was visiting in the Roberson home when Washington visited there in 1757, while he was on his way to Boston on military business. He spent ten days at the home of this cousin on his way to Boston, and one week there on his return; and because of entries



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in his account book at that time, for sundry pounds spent "for treating the ladies," and for tailors' bills, he goes down in history as a suitor for the proud Miss Philipse's hand. There is a letter, written more than a year later by a friend of Washington, Joseph Chew, which shows that that gentleman was interested in bringing about a match between Miss Philipse and the promising young Virginia colonel. Mr. Ford claims, in his biography of Washington, that "neither Washington's treats nor his clothes won the fair lady," and that she refused his proposal. This suggests that romantic matters went much further between the two than some writers would have one believe. Still, it may have been that his patronage of the "tailor and all his tribe," and his escorting "ladies to exhibitions and dances" while on this journey, was to advance his sophistication in the graces of manner and dress for the benefit of the fair charmer of Belvoir. All the world knows that the flame, kindled in the heart of Washington by the fascinating mistress of that grand old home, smouldered on to the day of his death.

Mrs. Fairfax was said to have been inclined to coquetry. Whether it was for her own amusement, and to gratify personal vanity that she, within the limits of convention, encouraged Washington's friendship, or because she recognized in the youth the promise of greatness that was apparent to all men with whom he came in contact, will never be clearly known. At any rate, it is a matter of history that she did "enmesh him with her charms and beauty," while teaching him to read Shakespeare, Addison, Pope, and *The Spectator*; and how to act

in amateur performances with herself in scenes from drama and comedy. Of this he made mention in a letter to her from camp, stating that he would consider himself "doubly happy in being the Iuba to such a Marcia as you make." It can easily be imagined how such a lovely instructress might inspire a crude young surveyor, the Washington of that time, to achieve renown. This cultivated woman, who rounded off the edges of his sturdy, remarkable character by her companionship, was the essence of refinement and culture.

From biography it may be seen that the other romances of Washington's life may truly be called "zephyrs," when compared to the deep and lasting passion that finally swept the caution and strength of his powerful brain aside, and brought him to obedience of his heart. This is seen in the following letter written from Fort Cumberland, on September 12th, 1758, just four months before his marriage to Martha Custis.

"DEAR MADAM:

"Yesterday I was honored with your short but very agreeable favor of the first inst. How joyfully I catch at the happy occasion of renewing a correspondence which I feared was disrelished on your part I leave to time, that never failing Expositor of all things, and to a monitor equally as faithful in my own Breast, to testify. In silence I now express my joy. Silence, which in some cases—I wish the present—speaks more intelligibly than the sweetest Eloquence.

"If you allow that my honor can be derived from my opposition to our present System of management you destroy the merit of it entirely in me by at-

tributing my anxiety to the animating prospect of Mrs. Custis, when—I need not name it, guess yourself—should not my own Honor and my Country's welfare be the incitement? 'Tis true I profess myself a votary to love. I acknowledge that lady in the case; and further, I confess that this lady is known to you. Yes, Madam, as well as she is to one who is too sensible to her Charms to deny the force of her amiable beauties in the recollection of a thousand tender passages that I could wish to obliterate till I am bid revive them; but experience, alas! sadly reminds me how impossible that is, and evinces an opinion, which I have long entertained, that there is a Destiny which has the sovereign control of our actions not to be resisted by the strongest efforts of Human Nature.

“ You have drawn me, dear Madam, or rather I have drawn myself, into an honest confession of the simple fact. Misconstrue not my meaning, 'tis obvious; doubt it not, nor expose it. The world has no business to know the object of my love, declared in this manner to you, when I want to conceal it. One thing above all things in this world I wish to know, and only one person of your acquaintance can solve me that or guess my meaning—but adieu to this till happier times, if ever I shall see them; the hours at present are melancholy dull ——

“ Be assured that I am, dear Madam, with most unfeigned regard,

“ Yr. most obedient, most obliged Hble servant,  
“ GEO. WASHINGTON.”

This letter no doubt surprised and disconcerted Sarah Fairfax, the discreet coquette of whom there is no word of the slightest deviation from the most rigid interpretation of her marital code. It did not unbalance her, however. There was evidently a

prompt reply to it, a diplomatic attempt to misunderstand the letter's import, as the extracts from Washington's equally prompt answer show.

*"Camp at Rays Town,  
" 25th, Sept'r. 1758.*

"DEAR MADAM:

"Do we still misunderstand the true meaning of each other's letters? I think it must appear so, tho' I feign hope the contrary, as I cannot speak plainer without—but I will say no more and leave you to guess the rest ——"

There is more in this letter that deals with less personal matters, then he concludes:

"One thing more and then I have done. You ask if I am tired at the length of your letter? No, Madam, I am not, nor neither can be while the lines are an inch asunder to bring you in haste to the end of the paper. You may be tired of mine by this. Adieu, dear Madam: you will possibly hear something of me or from me before we shall meet. . . . Believe me that I am most unalterable Yr. most obedt. and oblgd.

"G. WASHINGTON."

In these letters one sees the incontrovertible witness to the one impassioned recklessness of the austere Washington. He was a bit gloomy at this time over military affairs, and about to face death in the oncoming campaign of Fort Duquesne. Possibly, too, he saw the approaching struggles of Valley Forge and Brandywine, and felt the weight of his nearing "Herculean experience." Feeling of all

sorts crystallize under the stress of war, and what is mere sentiment in peace becomes a strong love in war. Washington, very likely, trembled with the fear of never again seeing the woman of his heart, and like many another man under the same circumstances, he decided that he would not risk death with his great secret untold.

During the spring before Washington's famous love letter was written to Sally Fairfax, he had met Mrs. Custis. Benson J. Lossing gives a graphic account of that meeting as "love at first sight." Still, another writer declares, "Lossing had never heard of the spell of Sally Fairfax." The same writer goes on to state that there was a young woman in that historic drawing-room who wrote, immediately after the meeting of Washington and Mrs. Custis, to a friend. She told of Bishop, the body servant, frequently reminding his master that it was time for them to be on their way. Then she apostrophized, "Ah, Bishop, there was an unseen urchin in that drawing-room more powerful in swaying the hearts of men than King George and all his governors."

The drawing-room was that of Major William Chamberlayne, who lived near the young widow, Mrs. Daniel Park Custis. His residence was near a "public crossing known as William's Ferry." The widow Custis was visiting at the Major's house on the day he was attracted by the sight of a tall officer riding a bay horse, accompanied by a mounted body servant. Washington was considered the finest figure on horseback in America, and it was not difficult for the Major to recognize him. He could not let

him pass without inviting him into his home. Washington said that he was in haste to keep an appointment in Williamsburg, but being pressed by Major Chamberlayne he consented to stop long enough for dinner.

The story of his remaining over night and until late into the next day before proceeding to his urgent appointment in Williamsburg has been related many times. It is also a familiar story that soon after this first meeting of Washington and the young widow of twenty-six, the news of their engagement traveled to Belvoir. It was in answer to the playful jibe about that news, written by Sally Fairfax, that Washington, with perfect candor, wrote her the truth. By this action, he removed from his life, when it became dangerous, the companionship of the most magnificent, if saucily coquettish, gentlewoman who ever crossed his path.

This woman the world knows he never forgot, for after more than forty years of domestic harmony with the wholesome wife he faithfully cherished through all their years of wedlock, he wrote again to the "white rose in his laurel wreath." A paragraph in that letter is but a confirmation of the love story of nearly half a century before.

In 1773 Mrs. Fairfax went to England to live, as her husband, George William Fairfax, claimed the title held by Lord Fairfax of Greenway Court; but she never became Lady Fairfax. Her husband died before he attained the lordship. Yet, again, Sally enjoyed the privileges of the first circles. It is said that she never lost her beauty or her spirits or her brilliant mental gifts. And one wonders if her color did



not rise when, at the age of eighty, she received in her home in Bath another letter from her greatest lover.

It was dated "Mount Vernon, May 16, 1798." This was but one year before Washington died. He began with the assertion that five and twenty years "have nearly passed away since I have considered myself as the permanent resident at this place or have been in a situation to indulge myself in familiar intercourse with my friends by letter or otherwise." He then referred to existing events, saying: "None of which events, however, nor all of them together, have been able to eradicate from my mind the recollection of those happy moments—the happiest of my life—which I have enjoyed in your company. . . ."

This paragraph is given by Mr. Paul Leicester Ford, and by other biographers of Washington, in italics, and the entire letter is included in many biographies. It has influenced many to consider Washington's marriage to Martha Custis merely one of suitable convention; yet there are equally as many who believe that that marriage was the sweet answer to the cry of a brave soldier's heart.

## CHAPTER II

### JOHN ADAMS

(1797-1801)

DYNAMIC force is no uncommon thing in the world. Some one has said that "ring-tailed forces go howling up and down the streets in every direction. The only uncommon thing is a man who can lay forcible hands on a force and direct it."

Such a man was John Adams, the second President of the United States. He was a person of enormous vitality. By that, however, is not meant physical strength, for he complained of illness all the years of his long life. Nor was he in any manner a muscular giant; he was small in stature, although almost a roly-poly in plumpness. His physiognomy was noble and impressive, suggesting, by the general contour of his features, benevolence rather than passion; yet one learns from history that the blood ran hot in his veins.

Henry Adams, his great-grandson, described him as "turbulent," which is forgivable, as he lived in turbulent times. It is said that the world has never suffered so much evil from turbulent people as it has from cold-blooded ones; so perhaps it is well to be thankful for those who are born with a bottled-up energy that will not let them be satisfied with things as they are. Certainly, the world has very generally acknowledged that it is thankful for John Adams—

“the brilliant, bitter-tongued, lovable, passionate Puritan,” whose blood flowed hotter than did the blood of most men of his generation, and whose deepest interest was in the laws that affect the rights of the world.

One cannot do the things John Adams did, unless he is possessed of enormous vitality. It requires hot blood to generate such a vital force. If one examines his life closely, it will be seen that John Adams was not unlike the average American of to-day, a highly nervous individual. That he was morbid and irritable, as he himself asserted, was merely a matter of nerves. “Too much reading, too much thinking, too much arguing, too much writing!” Mr. Samuel McCoy says in his book, *This Man Adams*. And when one reads that his edited writings fill ten enormous volumes,—two million words, which probably would have been ten million had not the larger part of his writings been lost,—one can readily agree with Mr. McCoy.

He wrote solemnly in his diary, begun when he was nineteen years old, about his duty to study, but it is plain that he worked not from pious compunctions, but rather because he could not help it. That birth-force, the powerful vitality that came into the world in the tiny mite of humanity that was born on October 30th, 1735, drove him on like a fire, all the days of his ninety years.

From this long duration of life and from this fiery temperament, one might expect romances galore, but so far as can be gathered, there was only one. An extract from his autobiography states that he was of an amorous disposition. From the early age of

ten or eleven he was fond of the society of "females," and he had his favorites among the girls of seven and eight in whose company he spent many of his evenings. This shows him a very precocious youngster, thoroughly capable of giving stare for stare with little girls, as Mr. McCoy says, and displaying his boyish accomplishments upon ponds of ice, to their rapt admiration. Yet even at that early age he was master of his fate. No love affairs arose out of the evenings spent in the society of his favorite young "female" of that youthful date, or out of later association; though, when he had finished college, he still enjoyed the company of girls, being gallant to them, quoting poetry, and reading Shakespeare to them. Evidently it was just the give and take of youthful talk that he enjoyed, and like many morose men, he was able to get on more agreeably with girls than with companions of his own sex.

Mr. McCoy claims that John Adams must have known his bride from childhood, as her family lived in a village adjacent to Braintree, where he was born, but that he did not single her out from among his numerous "favorite young women" until he was twenty-three. Still, considering that she was Parson Smith's daughter, and ranked much higher in the social calendar of that day than did John Adams, the son of a poor shoemaker-farmer, who had chosen law for a profession, Mr. McCoy's claim does not seem entirely justified.

It would be pleasant to think of John and Abigail as childhood friends, for even as a very small girl she was quick of wit and as intelligent a reader as John himself. It is doubtful that the apple-cheeked

boy would have thought of cutting a figure on the ice-pond for her benefit, and his prowess at kite-flying, shooting, or swimming would hardly have been a favorite topic of conversation with her. For, although Abigail was not physically the type of robust girl who could have done any of those things, had such sports been thought proper for a girl in her day, she was not in any case likely to have been in the least impressed by them. When boyish exercise was the prime interest of John Adams's life, partly as a means of awing small girls into admiration, Abigail was able to do her share in the youthful talk of books.

A weakly baby and a sickly child, she never trotted to school as did her sister Mary, but was taught at home by her father, Parson Smith. Then, at an early age, she was turned loose in the library of her grandfather, Colonel John Quincy, and history, poetry, and *The Spectator*, with the Bible as the bed-rock of her Puritan existence, became the sources of her education. Her grandmother's fireside was her school, and while she learned from the estimable old lady to discuss the gentler arts, she also learned that larger wisdom, the love of laughter, and how to make of it high piety, common sense, and virtue.

Such was the young lady, Dorothy Bobbie tells in her life of Abigail Adams, on whom John called at the Parson's home in the neighboring village of Weymouth. He was taken there by his friend, Richard Cranch, who had graduated from Harvard in the same class with him. It was no callow youth who accompanied his friend, for from a note written by John Adams when he was twenty-six, referred to

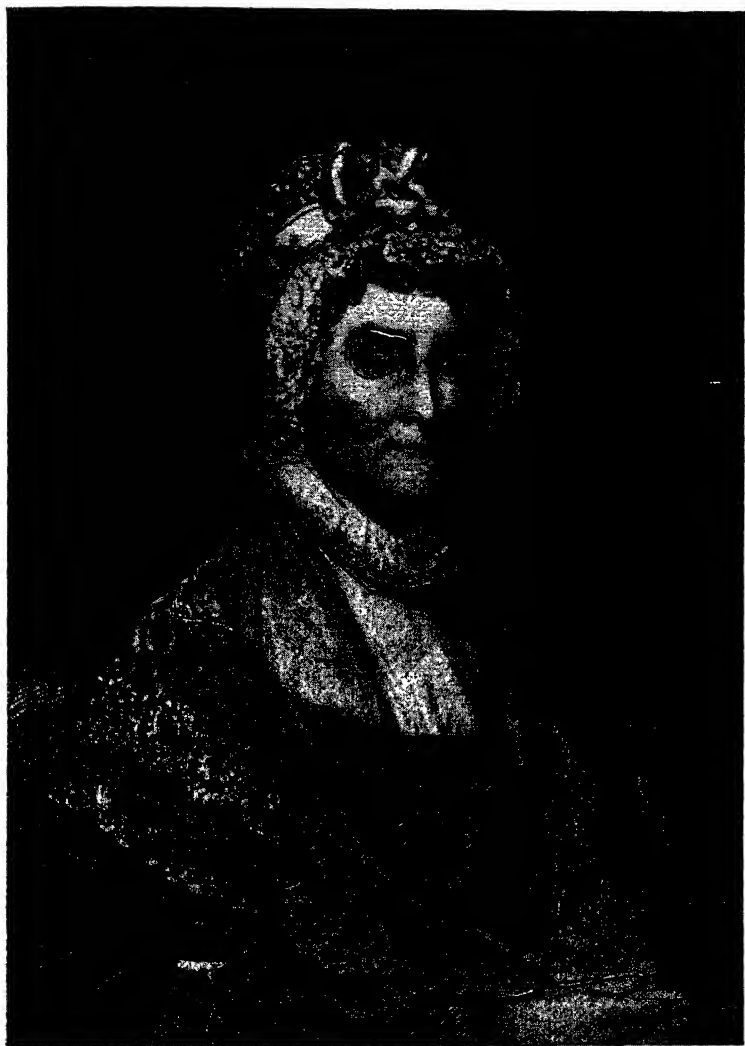
by Mr. McCoy in his biography, this call was not made until John was twenty-three, and had taught in the grammar school in Worcester for two years, while he studied law under Mr. Putnam.

Young Cranch, it seems, was courting the Parson's eldest daughter, Mary, whom he married later, and he wanted his friend to meet her. John did. He also met her younger sister, Abigail, and found that he could not withstand the sweet maid in her outstanding skirts, her high-heeled slippers, and dainty kerchief. A gentle-faced maid she was, with soft dark hair and luminous dark eyes full of hidden laughter. Her nose is said to have been pure patrician and "her mouth smiled away the not-too-great obstruction of a very determined chin." With her quick wit and a quiet dignity, she was all that John Adams had ever fondly dreamed of in a wife-to-be. That they should fall in love was as inevitable as it was for the stars to shine. But it was no comfortable courtship.

Not one bit of sympathy or encouragement did John receive in the Parson's household, except, indeed, from Abby. True, he was a lawyer. He had been introduced to the Bar of Boston and sponsored by Jeremiah Gridley, who had seriously advised him against hampering his career by an early marriage. He was doing well, distinguishing himself by slowly working up one of the best practices in that district of the colony; and for his honorable bearing and intellectual achievements parents of youthful daughters usually liked him and sought him out. But Parson Smith's wife had been a Quincy. The Quincys, the Nortons, and the Tyngs loomed large in the

aristocracy of Massachusetts, and they looked down their aristocratic noses at young John Adams, son of the shoemaker-farmer in Braintree, and follower of that suspicious profession of law. For him to aspire to one of the shining lights of their circle was presumption of no small moment.

In those days many people looked upon the practice of law as highly dishonest; to them, it was a profession that subverted the very edicts of law-makers. The farmer Adams himself had been no little shocked and disappointed at his son's choice of a profession. He had sent him to Harvard with the intention of making a minister out of him. Such a calling would have raised him in social standing to the level of the highest, the clergy of that time being the social, as well as the spiritual, leaders of the colonies. One may read in John Adams's diary what he recorded about his parents when he was twenty-five:—that they had retarded his education because they were ignorant of what was proper for him. This is not unlike the sentiment of the present generation of boys, concerning their parents' wisdom. "Resistance to something was the law of New England nature," says Henry Adams, and John resisted the pulpit; but not until he had spent several months reading theological works, as he knew from early boyhood how earnestly his family was hoping that he would become a minister. It seems that in his last two years at college the idea that he would make a better lawyer than he would a clergyman was whispered to him by his fellow students, who had banded themselves together for the purpose of reading any new publications, or whatever poetry and dramatic



ABIGAIL SMITH ADAMS  
(*Mrs. John Adams*)





compositions they might obtain, while they imbibed freely of cider. "I shall never forget how refreshing and salubrious we found that cider, hard as it often was," wrote John Adams in his diary.

So, in 1755, when he was graduated from Harvard College at the age of nineteen, his inclination was fixed upon the profession of law, though his final decision was not made. A lawyer would have to be paid a fee for taking him into his office, and he would have to be fed and clothed for at least two years. He had no money, and his father had three other sons. His honor would not allow him to ask anything more of his father; and when he took his degree it was with his mind unsettled as to whether he should study divinity, law, or science. It was a clergyman who put him in the way of making his decision. This man was from Worcester, and he had come sixty miles to the graduating ceremonies of John Adams's class. So impressed was he by the address delivered in Latin by young John, as one of the honor students, that he immediately engaged him as a teacher for the grammar school in Worcester. "Three weeks after commencement," says Mr. McCoy, "a groom was sent for John Adams, leading a saddle-horse to escort him to his first job." And in Worcester, John met Colonel James Putnam, "a lawyer of diabolical reputation."

Beginning in February, 1756, John Adams's diary is filled with allusions to Colonel Putnam. In August of that same year he began the study of law under his instruction, while he taught the Worcester school. Then began his climb from a clean boyhood to straight and honored manhood. He took his tasks.

both great and small, with deep and rigid seriousness, and one learns from his diary that he alternately hated and loved his work; but he never failed to be tremendously in earnest, tremendously anxious to keep his path clear, his friendships pure.

After teaching and working at his law studies for two years, he wrote, in his diary, of two gentlemen who called on him and invited him to settle in Worcester; but because he was in ill health he accepted his father's invitation to return home. He had panted for the ocean breezes while in Worcester, he wrote, and when he returned to Braintree that October of 1758, he dawdled happily in the golden sunshine for a month, often climbing the hill near his father's house to look over the blue water of the salt bay that opens into the ocean, and farther off to the roofs of houses in Boston.

It was at the end of this month that he presented himself to some of the leading attorneys of Boston, and was sponsored by Mr. Jeremiah Gridley. It must have been about this time, also, that he was taken by his friend, Richard Cranch, to call at the home of Parson Smith. And even if he did not receive any help with his courting from Abigail's family, the fact that he was not abashed by girls when he was ten or eleven would certainly indicate that he would need no help at twenty-three.

Laura E. Richards states in her biography of Abigail Adams, that John had to tie his own horse and find his sweetheart as he could, and that no one ever offered him a "courting stick." This instrument is described as a hollow stick about an inch in diameter and six or eight feet long, fitted with pieces

for the mouth and the ear, through which lovers, seated on either side of the wide fireplaces, might carry on their courting in the presence of others,—a much-used device of the time.

John Adams might have declined this means of talking to his beloved had such a stick been offered him. One is persuaded to believe that he would have done so, in the face of such written sentiments as the following: “I am thrown into a kind of transport when I behold the amazing concave of heaven, sprinkled and glittering with stars. . . . The vibrations of music in the air, I confess, produce in me sensations of pleasure so intense that it is all that the organs of my body can bear.” Any one so finely strung to a sense of beauty, one feels, could hardly tolerate the crudeness of a courting stick.

Abigail Smith, we judge, had a mind of her own when it came to the young man from Braintree. She had been taught from earliest childhood that “small Puritans”—and grown-up ones, too, for that matter—should never speak of unpleasant things. Therefore, Abigail, from habit, did not tell her relations and friends what she thought of their freely expressed views on the matter of her marriage. Yet she knew exactly what she would do when the time came. She had learned, also, from none other than her father, the value of clear-sightedness and singleness of purpose. She had recognized the one man who suited her when she saw John Adams, and she meant to cleave to no other.

He wrote nothing of his courtship, except that “it is proper to recollect something which makes an article of great importance in the life of every man.”

Then he spoke of his amorous disposition, and said that he controlled it for seven years after he entered college, which was from sixteen to twenty-three, and that it then returned and engaged him too much until he was married.

“ I shall draw no character, nor give any enumeration of my youthful flames,” he wrote in his diary. “ It would be no compliment to the dead or the living. This I will say—they were all modest and virtuous girls, and always maintained their character through life. No virgin or matron ever had cause to blush at sight of me, or regret her acquaintance with me. . . .”

Parson Smith's family had to get used to John's coming and going, which lasted for six years before he married Abigail. Their courtship was probably carried on by letter, as every one knows that this dainty Puritan lady was a famous letter-writer, and that she formed the habit of writing letters early in her life. Neighbors and friends lived at too great distances from each other, in those days, for their children to assemble frequently for the exchange of youthful confidences. They, therefore, occupied much of their time writing letters to each other. Abigail signed her letters to her young friends, “ Diana,” but when she began to write to John Adams, she used the pseudonym of “ Portia,” that best suiting her taste as the proper ending of a letter addressed to a young lawyer.

It was said that Abigail's mother, a Quincy, gradually unbent to John during the many visits he made at the parsonage, and that her father, to whom she was particularly dear, owing to her delicate baby-

hood and childhood, was her secret ally from the first, since between Parson Smith and John Adams there was much sympathy. Both were men of high ideals, and both took pride in their views on life.

So the parson, in spite of all the haranguing against the match by his family and friends, married his brilliant Abby to this farmer's son on the 25th of October, 1764. And with a whimsicality that was peculiar to him, he preached the marriage sermon from the text, "For John came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, yet ye say 'He hath a devil!'"

If Abigail, though, ever found any devil in her John it was only a devil of over-seriousness. He took his happiness as he took everything else in his life, with a great earnestness, a great anxiousness to keep it always pure and undefiled. He grumbled in his diary, not only at others, but very freely at himself, "partly because it was his nature to grumble," says one writer, "and partly to fulfill the acknowledged Christian duty of self-abasement." The lovable grumbler of his diary, the serious lover of Abigail, became one of America's greatest defenders of human rights.

## CHAPTER III

### THOMAS JEFFERSON

(1801-1809)

THE youthful infatuations of Thomas Jefferson, our third President, began when he was seventeen. At this age he was a tall, lanky youth who rode his horse with a loose-jointed grace that showed familiarity with the saddle. A clear-eyed, healthy-looking lad he was, with red hair and thin, freckled skin that blistered easily when exposed to either the sun or the wind, and was said to be nearly always peeling. "Most unattractive in his youth," says one writer, "but good-looking at maturity and beautiful in age."

When seventeen, Jefferson mounted his horse and rode over the mountains into the world that, up to this time, had been merely hearsay to him. His destination was Williamsburg, the capital of colonial Virginia and the winter rendezvous for the gentry of the lower counties, who set the pitch for local society. It also furnished the only educational center of those days in the South.

When Jefferson entered William and Mary College, John Page of Roswell, Ben Harrison of Brandon, and other sons of famous Tidewater families became his intimates. He visited often in their homes, and did his share of dancing and flirting with every pretty girl he met; in fact, from that time until

his marriage, he seems to have been continually in love. On his first return home from Williamsburg, he stopped at Fairfield, "a day's ride from Shadwell," to spend the Christmas holiday with a friend. He had taken along his fiddle and some new minuets he had bought, to furnish his share in the season's entertainment. The next morning he wrote a letter to John Page, which is filled with glimpses of his humor and his lovesickness.

Some one has said that he must have been put to sleep in the garret of that house, as he told Page, in this letter, of the rats eating up his pocketbook; and added that, not being content, they also carried away his "jemmy-worked silk garters" and the half-dozen new minuets. Besides, it had rained that night and the roof leaked, which caused him his greatest calamity of all—the loss of his watch-paper. "Now, you know," he wrote, "if chance had anything to do with this matter, there were a thousand other spots where it might have chanced to leak as well as this one, which was perpendicular over my watch. But I'll tell you, it's my opinion that the devil came and bored the hole over it on purpose." The watch was in a pool of water when he awoke, he said, and it had lost its speech, for which he would not have cared had not the water got inside the case and wet the profile of his beloved Belinda (Rebecca Burwell), that she had given him, cut in black paper. "Although the picture is defaced, there is so lively an image of her imprinted in my mind that I shall think of her too often, I fear, for my peace of mind; and too often, I am sure, to get through old Coke this winter. . . . I do wish the devil had old Coke,



for I never was so tired of an old scoundrel in my life." At this point in the letter he referred again to the ladies, and wanted to be remembered most affectionately to all whom he had met since he had been in Williamsburg, particularly the Miss Burwells and the Miss Potters. "I would fain ask the favor of Miss Rebecca to give me another watch-paper of her own cutting, which I should esteem much more, though it were a plain round one, than the nicest in the world cut by other hands; however, I am afraid she would think this presumption, after suffering the other to get spoiled. If you think you can excuse me to her for this, I would be glad if you would ask her."

Can it be imagined that the same person who wrote these childishly adorable words could pen that mighty document, the "Declaration of Independence"? Yet, only thirteen years after writing the letter containing these words, we see him, a serious-minded gentleman, on his way from Monticello to Philadelphia in his own carriage, to complete one of the greatest official papers ever conceived by the mind of man.

Jefferson did not marry the young lady who cut his watch-paper. His courting of her was more restrained than impulsively candid, and evinced all the way through an indifference reacting on his success. This is surprising, since we are told that he could pay compliments with the skill of a courtier, and possessed a most persuasive tongue when it came to argumentative conversation. Yet, in this case, both failed him, according to Mr. Albert Jay Nock, who states that John Page earned a martyr's crown

by stalking down Miss Burwell and putting the matter of Jefferson's love before her. Still, one cannot study the early life of Jefferson without being sure that it was Rebecca Burwell who fascinated him first and longest.

She lived at Carter's Grove, near Williamsburg, in a beautiful old hip-roofed house, sheltered by two noble elms that stretched wide arms above it, and with the mosses of age framing its dormer windows. Before it was a wide lawn bounded by a low paling fence, and in the rear was a garden filled with carefully tended flowers and fruit trees, the blossoms of which made the surrounding air faint with their odorous breath in spring. The whole homestead had about it an air of comfort, and a quiet of happy repose conducive to sentiment. It formed a most glamorous setting for pretty girls. It was a dangerous magnet for the young men of that day who gathered at William and Mary College, and a proper abode for sylvan queens, if one is to accept such descriptions of Miss Rebecca Burwell as are scattered through John Esten Cooke's *Youth of Jefferson*.

According to Mr. Cooke, she was about seventeen at the time, possessing the freshness and innocence of childhood, with the grace and elegance of a fairy, such as was written of by the olden poets. "Her voice was like liquid moonlight and melodious flowers. Its melting involutions and expiring cadences unwound like satin ribbon gradually drawn out." (Poor Jefferson, who loved music and claimed that it was the favorite passion of his soul!) "Around her fair brow and rosy cheeks fell myriads of golden 'drop curls,' and her eyes were as the azure of the

heavens from which they had stolen their hue, and as one great poet said of another fair lady, 'with a charming archness' in them." When she played the spinet and sang the sentimental songs of the day, "the music came over Jefferson like a shower of perfume." Then again it would be a popular ditty in "her laughing voice, 'Pretty Betty Martin, tiptoe-fine.'"

Yet, the courting was carried on vicariously. Jefferson did not bare his heart to his fair Belinda. From Shadwell, where he was spending the summer overseeing his farm and reading law, he wrote again to his friend John Page: "How does R. B. do? Had I better stay here and do nothing, or go down and do less? . . . Inclination tells me to go, receive my sentence, and be no longer in suspense; but reason says, if you go and your attempt proves unsuccessful, you will be ten times more wretched than ever." Then he received a letter from Page, telling him that he had a rival, and urging him to quick action. Page offered to serve as his attorney, and to negotiate option on Miss Burwell's affection, "if only you will hurry down from Shadwell and take the option up."

To that letter Jefferson made no answer for a full month, and when he did, the answer was filled with high philosophy. Later, becoming aware that his attitude would strike Page as lukewarm, he finally disclosed the actual state of his mind. "He was fairly certain that he loved Miss Burwell, but wholly certain that he wanted to go traveling," is the way Mr. A. J. Nock gives it. "I shall visit in particular England, Holland, France, Spain, Italy (where I would buy me a good fiddle) and Egypt, and return

home by the way of Canada." He seemed to want Page to look the situation over, and to see what could be done about it. "I would be scared to death at making her so unreasonable a proposal as that of waiting my return, unless she could be prepared for it. I am afraid it will make my chance of succeeding considerably worse."

That October, however, when he returned to college, he made up his mind to make his position clear to the girl whom, in his letters and verses, he had for so many months celebrated as Belinda, after the Restoration fashion. A ball was to be given in the Apollo room at the Raleigh Tavern. He dressed in all his finery of Mecklenburg silk, after having rehearsed in his head for days such thoughts as occurred to him to be most fitting to express his love. But alas, all his carefully rehearsed speeches came to naught! Belinda was too ravishing in her rich velvet, looped back from her satin underskirt, and in her low-cut bodice with its profusion of lace falling away from her snowy bosom. On her tiny feet, which peeped from beneath her full skirts, were red morocco shoes tied with bows of ribbon, and adorned with heels not less than three inches high. Her bright golden curls were powdered and woven with pearls, and she wore a pearl necklace. Her attendant was no less a gallant than the handsome, smiling Jacques Ambler, Jefferson's rival, who later, at another dance, it is said, took the little beauty up a tree to get her away from her admirers long enough to propose. He had had a platform built in the tree on purpose, and he serenaded the dancers from there while they strolled on the lawn or in the garden be-

tween dances. This gave him the opportunity to persuade Miss Burwell to permit him to hoist her to the platform, where he detained her uninterrupted until he could press his suit for her heart.

On the night on which Jefferson made his sentimental fiasco, this Beau Brummell was as resplendent as the lovely Belinda whom he escorted. His "ambrosial curls and powdered queue" were tied with orange ribbon, and his suit of cut velvet was ornamented with gold buttons. A flower-embroidered, satin waistcoat reached to his knees, and his cuffs were almost large enough to fill a barrel. His chin reposed upon a frill of irreproachable Mechlin lace, and scarlet silk stockings covered his legs. Is it any wonder that the tall, rawboned youth should lose his head as well as his heart, in the face of such a rival? His own pen gives a much more vivid description of his experience at that memorial ball, than any biographer's can.

"Last night," he wrote to his confidant, John Page, "as merry and agreeable as dancing could make me, I never could have thought the succeeding sun would have seen me so wretched as I now am. I was prepared to say a great deal. I had dressed up in my own mind, such thoughts as occurred to me, in as moving language as I knew how, and expected to have performed it in a tolerable exciting manner. But, Good God! When I had the opportunity of venting them, a few broken sentences, uttered in great disorder and interrupted with pauses of uncommon length, were the visible marks of my strange confusion."

It is believed that this affair with Belinda marked

a decisive turn in Thomas Jefferson's life; that it killed whatever romantic strains may have existed in his nature, and matured him. One sees him settling down to far more serious study, and there is less time for card playing, fox hunting, dancing, and flirting. About this time, also, Dr. Small was appointed *ad interim* professor of philosophy at William and Mary, and he rescued Jefferson from his frivolous companions and brought his mind back to the serious purpose he had when he entered college.

Through Dr. Small, Jefferson was introduced to George Wythe, who soon accepted him as a law student, and who in turn introduced him to Governor Fauquier. These were the first real master minds with whom Jefferson came in contact, and he remained always the disciple of these three cultivated men of science. Mr. A. J. Nock says that "almost the only fervency one finds in Jefferson's writings is when, late in life, he records in his autobiography his admiration for Governor Fauquier, Mr. Wythe, and Dr. Small." Of the latter he wrote, "he was to me as a father, and his presence at Williamsburg probably fixed the destinies of my life."

His preparatory period ended when he was admitted to the bar in 1767. The master of Shadwell had sown his wild oats and had his brief fling at dissipation; now he returned to Albemarle and began to practise law. There, as a boy, he had been taught pioneer habits by his father, who instilled in him the love of walking and riding, gave him a gun to hunt with, and taught him how to row a boat on the river, to fish, and to swim. These exercises engendered a

love of the outdoors in Jefferson, which was cherished to the end of his long life. Especially did mountain-tops appeal to him, and naturally the one that was in the early grant of his father's thousand acres became the focus of his fondest dreams.

Monticello rose across the river from the sightly spot his father had purchased on which to build Shadwell for his bride, Jane Randolph. Legal conveyance in those days required a consideration, and the "consideration," in this case, as shown by an old deed, was "Henry Weatherbourn's biggest bowl of arrack punch." Through all the impressionable years of Thomas Jefferson's life that little mountain held the chief mysteries of his childhood. For him, Mr. Paul Wilstach says, "it was peopled with the fairies and ogres which inhabit every child's world. It was alive with wild life that engages every normal boy's curiosity; and it was his constant temptation. It was his playground and the gymnasium of his knitting muscles, and, at its crest, the far-flung panorama of beauty, which to him unequaled and unimagined anywhere else in the world, gave him boyhood's greatest thrill." When he returned to it after seven years spent in study at Williamsburg, his first plan was to build a home on the top of his mountain.

His law practice now took him from courthouse to courthouse, and the winter sessions of the House of Burgesses called him down to Williamsburg, but he began to draw plans for his mountain-top home. And in 1770, when Shadwell caught fire and burned to the ground, a beginning had been made on his plans. After the catastrophe, his mother and family went

to live in an overseer's home, but he rode up the mountain and settled himself in a modest bachelor's hall, a temporary shelter in one of the utility buildings that served as quarters for his workmen.

It must have been about this time that Jefferson proposed marriage to the pretty widow, Mrs. Skelton. She was the daughter of John Wayles, a prosperous lawyer who practised law in Williamsburg. Jefferson went often to his home, "The Forest," in Charles City County, not far from the colonial capital; and the fiddle being the favorite passion of Jefferson's soul, this home became his strongest attraction, as Mrs. Skelton was musical. She was evidently of great personal charm, for it is said that in the first days of her widowhood "The Forest" was alive with suitors, who were so numerous that they got in each other's way.

She had married Bathurst Skelton in 1766, and in less than two years she was a childless widow not twenty years old. The story of how her admirers settled their problem has been told in several ways, but all agree that they drew lots to see who should have the first opportunity to propose to her. Jefferson had the luck to draw number one, and number two and three went along to hang over the fence until he could have his interview. Very soon the strains of a duet played on the spinet and violin came to them, accompanied at intervals by happy song, and there was that in the music that convinced those two waiting young men of the futility of their own suit or of any other. They went dejectedly away, leaving Jefferson, at last, to the bliss of requited love.



Mr. John Esten Cooke claims in his *Youth of Jefferson* that Mrs. Skelton was known to the young Virginia lawyer when she went to school in Williamsburg; that he danced with the pretty little Martha Wayles at the fatal ball where he found himself too full of love for Belinda for proper utterance; and so charming did he find the lovely miss of sixteen that he was ready to declare himself in the middle of a quadrille, but she flouted him then in favor of her boy lover, Bathurst Skelton.

However that may be, Thomas Jefferson and Martha Wayles Skelton were married at "The Forest," January 1, 1772, he in his twenty-ninth year and she in her twenty-third. The license-bond was written in Jefferson's own handwriting, and a copy of it can be seen in Mr. W. E. Curtis's biography. "He must have been a little nervous or absent-minded at the time," says Mr. Curtis, "for he describes his bride as 'a spinster.' Somebody corrected the mistake by running a pen through 'spinster' and writing the word 'widow' over it." Jefferson is said never to have left anything to his memory, and, as in every other expenditure, he did not abandon the fixed habit of his life in the matter of his marriage. In his account book he set down exactly what he paid the two clergymen, the musicians, and the tips he gave the servants. It is also recorded that he "loaned Mrs. Skelton ten shillings" two days before the ceremony, and that he borrowed twenty shillings from the parson before the wedding day was over. The festivities lasted for days, with music and dancing.

That January brought some of the heaviest snow "the then living generation remembers." But the

bride and groom, nothing daunted, started at an early date in a two-horse carriage for their future home on the mountain-top, a hundred miles away. As they advanced up the country, the increasing depth of snow in the road obliged them to leave their chaise at a friend's home and proceed the rest of the way on horseback. The sun was setting when they left the estate where their carriage was put up, and they had eight miles to travel over a rough, winding road that was little more than a bridle-path up the mountain. It was late in the night when they reached the small one-room brick house that was attached to the slave quarters, which Jefferson had been using, and which they were to share until the mansion was habitable. The slaves, not expecting them to come that night, had all gone to sleep, and Mr. Paul Wilstach says that "much nonsense has been written about how they spent the night with books, a fiddle, and a bottle of wine." Many state, however, that they soon had the little house flooded with light and warmth, and that their own good humor was augmented by a bottle of wine found behind some books. Parton says, "Who could wish a better place for a honeymoon than a snug brick cottage, lifted five hundred and eighty feet above the world . . . and three feet of snow blocking out all intruders?"

One can easily imagine how proudly Jefferson explained, in the bright sunshine of the next morning, the drawings of the house he had planned to build for their home. Then there was the surprise for his bride when she saw the matchless panorama from the summit of his mountain. Their future life stretched

invitingly out before them—Monticello and Jefferson's career were to rise together.

Jefferson is said to have been the best of husbands. He and his wife were mentally congenial, socially friends, and always lovers. Unfortunately, "no portrait of Martha Wayles Jefferson is known to have been painted. Certainly none is known to survive." She lived ten years and bore five daughters and one son; of these children, only three, and those daughters, survived their mother. Mr. Curtis claims that she was a jealous woman, because on her deathbed she exacted a promise from her husband never to marry again. There is a tradition of his excessive emotion on the occasion of his wife's death, which was recorded by his eldest daughter as remembered in her maturity. "In the four months the house was in dreadful suspense, my father sat up every third night, and he administered all my mother's medicine and her food. He was never where he could not hear the sound of her voice if she needed him. He sat beside her almost to the end, but just before the close of her earthly life, his grief overpowered him and he had to be led from the room to the library, where he lost consciousness, and remained insensible for so long a time that it was feared his end, too, had come." According to Mr. Wilstach, this does not ring quite true to the character of the philosopher as exhibited in other crises of his life. And he says that in all his letters and notebooks there is only one "qualifying mention of his wife, and it occurs in a notebook under the date of her death, September 6th: 'My dear wife died this day at 11 H. 45 A. M.'"

Of the permanence of his devotion to her memory,

on the other hand, there is the fact that, she having requested it of him, he did not marry again. His wonderful domestic joy seems to have found its apotheosis in care, first for his daughters, and secondly for his country.

## CHAPTER IV

### JAMES MADISON

(1809-1817)

MOST men begin to bid for love with their first coo, but not so with James Madison, our fourth President. He was thirty-two before Cupid's aim first found its mark, and the fair maiden was just half his age. Sweet sixteen-year-old Catherine Floyd, who was, according to Sidney Howard Gay, the daughter of General William Floyd of Long Island, New York, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and a delegate to Congress from 1774 to 1783.

That the young lady favored Madison's suit at first is attested by Mr. Hunt, who says that General Henry Lee congratulated Mr. Madison on his engagement and expressed the hope that the condition upon which he was about to enter would soften his political asperities.

It is very possible, judging from Mr. Gay's story of the affair, that the father of this young girl was more the admirer of the solemn suitor than was the daughter. As an older man and a statesman, it is reasonable to suppose that General Floyd understood the character of Madison and appreciated his finer abilities. It is said that he predicted a brilliant career for him, and General Floyd also may not have been unmindful of the fact that James Madison

would inherit the handsome estate of Montpelier. Still, to the credit of this lively girl, she was evidently thinking more of love than of ambition. The only future career she wanted to share was that of a poor young clergyman, "who—according to the reminiscences of an aged relative of hers—hung around her at the harpsichord . . . and talked more to the purpose with his eyes than ever the older lover discussing with her father the public debt could have done with his lips."

Tradition has it that she was encouraged to be on with the new love before she was off with the old by a friend somewhat older than herself. Possibly that lady thought Mr. Madison would be better mated with some one nearer his own age. At any rate, the engagement was broken, much to the disappointment of the young lady's father; and it is stated that the irrepressible Catherine in a merry jest sent her letter of dismissal to Mr. Madison sealed with a piece of rye dough. In due time she married the other suitor, the poor young clergyman, and Mr. Gay says that he knows no reason to suppose that she ever regretted that her humble home was in a rectory, when it might have been, at a later day, in the White House at Washington, had she chosen differently.

This unfortunate experience gave a more somber hue than ever to the outlook of this already grave young man. Mr. Madison, owing to a constitution delicate from childhood, had passed his entire boyhood and youth as a looker-on at life. He had been born on March 16th, 1751 at his grandparents' home on the Rappahannock River in King George County, Virginia; and shortly after the christening party

his mother and father took him to his Orange County home, where he spent all the rest of his life except the years he was in school, and those he gave to the service of his country.

Since christening parties were jolly occasions in those days, after the religious ceremony was over, James Madison's was most certainly the "one and only" frolic ever graced by his presence in childhood and most likely the only one of his entire youth. All the strain he ever put upon his health was study, and this he pursued with such passion while at Princeton College that he seriously impaired what physical strength he possessed. He returned to Montpelier, his home, so enfeebled that he was solitary and purposeless for a long time.

"What was there in life for James Madison?" writes Mr. Gaillard Hunt in his biography. "A youth in years without a youth's taste or mind. Life must have something more in it than the mere reading of books, roaming the clover fields and the woods of Orange County, and imparting knowledge to his younger brothers and sisters." It had, as one sees from the beginning of his public life at the age of twenty-five.

The old saying, "no love like the first love," appears profoundly discredited when one comes upon the dazzling romance of this little man in middle life. It makes one recognize also that although Mr. Madison was such a recluse in youth, he was in no way lacking in appreciation of youth and beauty. For all the disappointment at the hands of a wilful Catherine, the "incomparable Dolly" seems to have charmed him from the first. It could be

easily imagined that he was one of the many who stationed themselves along Chestnut Street to see her pass when, at the age of five-and-twenty, she was so charming, so youthful a widow that her Quaker friend bade her "hide thy face—there are so many staring at thee."

Dolly had been born on the twentieth of the merry month of May, 1768, and had been named Dorothy in honor of her ancestor, Dorothea Spotswood. "But love changed it to Dolly, and Dolly has tinkled down the ages as the synonym of sheer joy and great beauty ever since."

Not twenty-five miles from Montpelier, Mr. Madison's home in Orange, is Scotchtown in Hanover County, where Dolly Payne spent the first twelve years of her life. This house is an ancient, hall-like building that would delight the soul of any architect interested in colonial structure. It was built by a Scotchman, Colonel Chiswell, who liked broad spaces indoors as well as out, and its extraordinary length was arranged in eight large rooms opening on a wide hall above a basement said to contain a dungeon. There is a garret over the living-rooms, which, if unpartitioned then as now, was spacious enough to accommodate all the dancers in Hanover. A thousand acres of land surrounded the house, and from its stone-paved porches the owner could view green fields for long stretches toward the north and toward the south, framed in a border of dark forest.

In this lordly lodge had lived Sarah Cary, who gave her jewels to the patriot cause, and it had also been the home of Patrick Henry, Virginia's orator, when he was first elected governor of the State.



Before that, a certain terrible Mr. Forsythe is said to have lived there, and to have chained his wife in the dungeon—"though in our souls we believe the so-called dungeon to have been only a sweet-potato pit." That is certainly what it was used for when the house became the home of Dolly's father.

John Payne married the Hanover belle, Mary Coles, after she had refused half the gentry in the Virginia Colony, including Thomas Jefferson, and she became as strict a member of the Society of Friends as was her husband. Her father, William Coles, hailed from Enniscorth in Wexford County, Ireland. John Payne's father was an Englishman of wealth and education who had emigrated to this country and settled in Goochland County. He had married Ann Fleming, granddaughter of Sir Thomas Fleming, second son of an Earl of Scotland. Thus one sees that the blood of three kingdoms blended in the little maid, Dolly, of Scotchtown, as she was descended from Scotch, Irish, and English Virginia ancestry of noble lineage.

Like Mr. Madison, Dolly was not born at home, but in North Carolina while her parents were visiting relatives there. She was the first girl and the second child in a family of several children—a dainty, blue-eyed baby with jet black ringlets crowning a lovely, delicate, oval face. She soon grew to be the pet of the family, especially adored by her grandmother, Lucy Coles, because of the Irish-blue eyes she had inherited from her grandfather Coles. Those eyes were of wondrous sweetness, it is said, and they could scintillate with playfulness or mellow with sympathy. They were eyes that wrought havoc

with hearts all the days of her life. Her black curls, too, as she grew into girlhood, were forever straggling out from under her Quaker bonnet, making of her a gay-looking little Quaker maid, for all her demure behavior.

There is little doubt that if James Madison, her Orange County neighbor, could have seen her at this period of her life he would have been captivated in spite of his sickly youth. But he was at that time one of the most serious students in Princeton College, working long hours on his favorite studies. His diligence in study never could have been Dolly's. No wonder she revered the learned little man when she came to know him.

She had been born a frivolous little soul who hankered after ribbons and other fripperies. The happiest hours of her life were those she spent with her worldly old grandmother, Lucy Coles, who gave her forbidden jewelry, which she sewed into a tiny bag and wore around her neck on a string, beneath her plain, gray Quaker frock. The very first grief of her young life was over the loss of those treasures. Dolly had taken a long ramble in the woods and did not discover, until after she was in school, that the string of the bag containing the jewelry, regarded by her Quaker parents as wicked baubles, had become loose. Many tears were shed, and many hours were spent in hunting for the jewels, but they were never found. Only in her Mammy Amy's arms could the small culprit sob out her distress and find sympathy. This faithful old darky, whose turbaned head had nodded over Dolly's cradle many a night from dusk until dawn, crooned to the grieving child promises

of rich and handsome jewelry to come when she would be a grown lady. She thus hushed Dolly's tears and comforted her girlhood, just as her lullabies, crooned in her soft old negro voice, had soothed away all Dolly's baby cries and fears.

One cannot be convinced that Dolly's mother became entirely indifferent to innocent vanities on embracing the Quaker faith of her husband, as biographers say that she showed the most scrupulous care of Dolly's lovely complexion. It is said that when the little girl was old enough to start to the "old field school" she was sent every morning with a white linen mask fitted over her face, and sewed to the large sunbonnet that was fastened under her chin. Also, long home-made gloves covered Dolly's hands and arms well up over the gray sleeves of her Quaker dress.

John Payne could not stand the care-free lives of his Hanover neighbors, so it is stated, and that is why he migrated to Philadelphia, "the American paradise of Friends." There he became an elder, spoke in meeting with effect, and was called a Quaker preacher. But to Dolly there were more engrossing things in Philadelphia than the routine of Friend Meetings. She had an eye for the promenaders on the shady side of Chestnut Street, the men in their afternoon array of tight clothes, with silk stockings and pointed shoes ornamented with shining buckles, the ladies wearing hooped taffetas, flowered brocades, satin petticoats, and enormous feathered hats. There cannot possibly be a doubt that Dolly thought how enchanting she herself would look, dressed in such attire.

Still, Dolly Payne was of a nature to find joy in life, and the lack of fine dress, or any other deprivations, could not wholly dispel that joy. She found much to enliven her among the Quaker people of that day, even if she could not be one of the fashionable Philadelphians who went on merry sailing parties up the river to Gray's Ferry, where they sat under the trees and in the grottoes to drink tea, or strolled on the Chinese bridge in the moonlight. Mr. Allen C. Clark tells of her visits to the Creightons in Haddonfield, New Jersey, old tavern keepers on the King's Highway. The Creightons, it seems from Mr. Clark's account, were close friends of the Paynes, and he found that Dolly's memory still lived in Haddonfield. Although long years had passed since she tripped through the quiet streets, elderly people continued to repeat what their fathers and grandfathers had once said of her, "and from the glowing tributes paid to her charms it was easy to imagine that many a good Quaker lad's love was laid at her shrine." It is also reported that in those early Haddonfield days, Dolly often took frolicsome rides in the mail coaches that stopped twice daily at the Creighton Tavern. Her visits with these genial people, who were not such strict Quakers as were her own family, were the bright spots in her girlhood. There Dolly obtained some of her first impressions of days "untinctured by the gray shadows of the meeting-house."

Yet she was never known to contend against authority or parental discipline. She showed early in life a willingness to accept whatever fate might offer, and to make the best of it, always in a com-

plete serenity of spirit. When she was quite an old lady, she was heard to say, "Nothing matters enough to make a fuss over it." That attitude toward life was perhaps the key to her success.

So it was "in that delightful land washed by the Delaware River" that Dolly passed her budding womanhood. When she was twenty-one she yielded to her father's command and gave up her name for that of another Quaker, John Todd; though when he proposed, she had declared that she never meant to marry. It is doubtless a very trying ceremony when a Quaker maiden, considering matrimony, announces her intention. It is done at a meeting, and another meeting confirms it. The ceremony comes some weeks later, when the groom stands up in meeting and repeats the simple formula of taking the bride to be his wedded wife, and promises, through divine assistance, to be unto her a loving husband until separated by death. The bride utters the self-same vow, "changing husband for wife," the certificate of marriage is read, and the register is signed by a number of witnesses. That was the form of Dorothy Payne's and John Todd's wedding, after which all who signed the register went home with the parents and the newly wedded pair, to partake of the supper prepared as a wedding feast.

Three years later, when yellow fever ravaged Philadelphia, Mr. Todd removed his two sons and his wife, who was then in a critical condition from the birth of her second son, to Gray's Ferry. It is said that the beautiful Dolly was carried from the city on a stretcher, with her infant clasped to her breast. Her husband felt that he had to leave her

and return to the city to look after his parents, victims of the epidemic, of which both eventually died. On his return he told Dolly's mother that he felt the fever in his veins, but that he must see his wife once more. In a few hours he was dead, leaving contamination in the embrace which he gave his wife and his young child. Dolly recovered, but her infant died, and in the year 1793, she found herself a widow with one small son, and heir to this historic document: "I give and devise all my estate, real and personal, to the dear wife of my bosom, and the first and only woman upon whom my all and only affections were placed."

Dolly returned to her father's home in Philadelphia, where her mother, owing to the financial reverses of her husband, had assumed the responsibility of taking paying guests. Among them was the handsome and fascinating Aaron Burr, who, even before Dolly's year of mourning was out, made the match between the pretty widow and James Madison.

A widow at twenty-five, and such a widow as to hypnotize men by her beauty as she passed them on the street, could surely not be blamed for emerging from conventional gloom in a few months, when the New York Senator, of reputation irresistible to the fair sex, told her that the great little Madison had asked to be brought to see her. It is easy to imagine the enthusiasm and excitement of the gay and volatile Dolly.

Madison and Burr were at Princeton together, but they were not of the same set; their natures were antipathetic, and it was just one of those tricks of

fate that Burr should be the one to bring about the occasion of Madison's meeting the woman who was to reign forever after supreme in his life. Mrs. Robins says, "What a picture fancy can paint of that memorable meeting in Mrs. Payne's parlor of Quaker severity! Burr full of charm and grace; Madison a trifle constrained, unimpassioned, but with a glint of humor in his eyes." It would be interesting to know how Dolly, charmingly demure in a frock of mulberry satin, with a tulle scarf folded over her bosom, regarded them both. Against Burr's fascinating personality she must have discerned the sober power characteristic of James Madison, then not a Senator, but a member of the lower House. Or was she astute enough to perceive within the plain black clothes and ruffled shirt unmistakable tokens of qualities which would always sustain and delight her?

It was not long before Mr. Madison asked for the young widow's hand; and she bestowed it, to the pleasure of every one from General and Mrs. Washington to Dolly's mother. On the 15th of September, 1794, after an engagement of about six months, Dolly Payne Todd and James Madison were married by Rev. Dr. Balmaine, an Episcopal clergyman, in Harwood, Virginia, at the house of her sister, Mrs. George Steptoe Washington. This sister, the former Lucy Payne, had been only fifteen when she married the favorite nephew of General George Washington, and she was a very young matron to be entertaining so grand a wedding party two years later. From what one knows of the manner of an eighteenth-century wedding among the Virginia gentry, this

must have been a magnificent affair. All Dolly's near relatives were there, her mother and another sister, Anne Payne, having journeyed from Philadelphia by coach with Dolly and her small son, Payne Todd, while the prospective groom and some gentlemen friends rode beside the coach on horseback.

The wedding festivities lasted for days, with feasting and dancing until the nights were old. It is recorded that although Mr. Madison took no part in the gaiety, he was full of merry jokes. After the frolic in the mansion of Harwood with Dolly's people, the wedding trip began with a visit to Mr. Madison's people at Montpelier. As has been said by Mrs. Robins, this was surely "honeymoon road," through a panorama of loveliness in the Shenandoah Valley, merging as it was from summer green into autumn red, brown, and gold. It was the season of the year when the sun still shines bright through that early fall haze that some one has said makes the day feel like Sunday. The birds were twittering, the insects were humming, and the leaves rustled their lullaby in a chorus of happiness in the blue mist of the guarding mountains through which the couple passed.

But Mr. and Mrs. Madison could not linger with all these beauties of nature. They had to hurry back to Philadelphia, he for Congressional duties, and she for the part it had come time for her to play in social life. "Society was in high feather in 1794," and Dolly Madison, the one-time little maid of Scotch-town, soon "came to be its most graceful plume."

At her husband's request, she readily laid aside the sober Quaker dress and began to enjoy the burst



of glorious gaiety that was hers for long years afterward. All her childish longing for beautiful clothes and jewels had come to blossoming time, for the little man who had become her husband could deny her nothing. Her old Mammy Amy's promises of rich and lovely things to come to her seemed to have turned into prophecies. She soon became the most richly dressed woman of her day, and the most admired. She was described by no less a personage than the Marquis de Lafayette as the most polished, most captivating, most winning of amiable women. "I have visited all the courts of Europe, and most positively, I never have seen any Duchess, Princess, or Queen, whose manner, with equal dignity, blended equal sweetness. As I have seen her moving through admiring crowds, pleasing all, by making all pleased with themselves, yet looking superior to all, I often have exclaimed, 'She moves a goddess, and she looks a queen.'"

Another writer says of her, "Dolly had a good time and always to the tune of her husband's affection." She was of a sunny nature that loved pleasure, and he was big enough to be glad for her to enjoy the things for which he had no fancy. She was the nation's hostess for a longer period of time than any other woman, as Mr. Jefferson was a widower, and his daughters were married and lived at some distance from Washington when he was made President. Mr. Madison was his Secretary of State, and Mrs. Madison was most acceptable to the President as his assistant on official occasions. For sixteen years she managed and presided over the state and social functions of the White House, her



DOROTHY ("Dolly") PAYNE MADISON  
(*Mrs. James Madison*)



own husband being elected President after Jefferson's administration, and both men serving for two terms. It is easy to imagine Dolly's ecstasy as she witnessed the august inauguration of the little man she so dearly loved. She afterward entertained the Presidential party with good cheer, and danced at the ball in the evening, "where none were so elegant as the President's wife in a robe of yellow velvet, her bare neck and arms hung with pearls, and her head nodding beneath a Paris turban with bird-of-paradise plume."

When Mr. Madison retired from public life, which, in all, had claimed him for forty years, he was blessed with the love of Dolly to console his declining years. Not that he needed any consolation, for he was glad to return to the quiet of his Virginia home. No mean mansion was Montpelier for a retiring statesman and President, and there he and Dolly resumed the simple life of farmer and gardener. Dolly's early training at Scotchtown stood her in good stead here, as she was no stranger to dangling the great bunch of keys that marked her sovereignty over the household needs of a plantation and a hundred slaves.

As another has said, "she loved parties and she loved shops; she loved dances and she loved jokes; she loved people and she loved things; she loved her husband and she loved her home; and into the world she spilled sunshine which still sparkles along the way she went."

She threw her good ideas into the improvement of her husband's estate with the enthusiasm and cheery comradeship that marked their idyll of marital af-

fection. There never was any whining for past glory. In spite of early rising, days were all too short for the loving care she gave her household. As mistress of an open house she was always found mentally as scintillating, physically as beautiful, spiritually as lovable as she had ever been in Washington. And it is told that she moved through her large rooms as a queen, and lived the life of a model woman—ever the sweetheart of her much older husband.

## CHAPTER V

### JAMES MONROE

(1817-1825)

IF it is necessary to know the soil in order to know the character of the people—as claimed by Hon. F. J. Kingsbury, writing of old Connecticut—one may very well pronounce James Monroe of the elect. No soil was richer or more productive of notable men than that of his birthplace, Westmoreland, the most celebrated of colonial counties.

It is situated in the Northern Neck of Virginia, which is the uppermost of the nine peninsulas of the Old Dominion. It was here that one of the largest tracts of land in the colony was granted to Ralph Lord Hopton and others, afterward sold to John Lord Culpeper, and passed on to Lord Fairfax. One shore of the Northern Neck follows the flow of the Potomac River opposite the Maryland bank all the way to the mountains, while the opposite shore follows the Rapidan from its springheads in the Blue Ridge to where it joins the wide-mouthed Rappahannock and enters Chesapeake Bay.

There were choice estates overlooking the Potomac in James Monroe's day, and others, just as choice, were advantageously placed on the banks of the Rappahannock. The Virginia planters of this section were mostly transplanted Englishmen who emulated the social amenities and the culture of the

mother country. This is not mentioned for the purpose of stressing James Monroe's gentility, but rather to suggest a contrast. He was the son of Spence Monroe, a carpenter, who, as records show, apprenticed himself in 1743 to Robert Walker, joiner, of King George County. Mr. George Morgan, in writing of Monroe, says that the carpenter's trade was especially honorable and that gentlemen who called themselves carpenters no doubt served their apprenticeships, as the custom required, but afterward performed only the part of contractors and directors, leaving the manual labor to be done by slaves.

Be that as it may, the man who became the fifth President of the United States had been given Scotch cavalier ancestry on his father's side. His mother was of Welsh blood. She was Eliza Jones of King George County, sister of Joseph Jones, who was sent three times as delegate from Virginia to the Continental Congress, and who, in 1789, was appointed Judge of the district court. There has been much controversy as to James Monroe's cavalier ancestry, but at least it is proved that he was born on land of which his first ancestor to migrate to this country was the original grantee; he was certainly of strong Scotch-Welsh blood, intermingled with seventeenth-century Virginian; and, perhaps as a result, he became conspicuous for ability in an age of brilliant men.

The old Monroe house near the head of Monroe Creek no longer stands, and the spot is unmarked even by a pile of chimney bricks. But the site is no great distance from Wakefield, George Washing-

ton's birthplace, and no more than an hour's ride from the birthplace of another President, James Madison. It was on the 28th of April, 1758, that James Monroe was born. As soon as he was old enough, his education began under a school-teacher who had been brought over from Scotland. Later he attended Campbell's school, where he made the acquaintance and won the lifelong friendship of John Marshall, who later became the great Chief Justice. At the age of sixteen, he left home to enter the College of William and Mary at Williamsburg. Yet in this romantic spot one does not find that James Monroe, like the many notables who had attended this old college before him, found any fair Juliets to inspire him with Romeo tendencies. It is said of him that he always shied away from "the gay Sukeys" who danced in the Apollo room of the Raleigh Tavern, and from the girls who came in coaches to old Bruton Church.

It was more than two years after this time before there was any mention of a sweetheart in the life of Monroe. She was a pretty little Dutch maiden of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, who cheered his heart with her gracious company, while she nourished his war-stricken body with Dutch dainties from the family cupboards.

For Monroe's college career had come to an abrupt end. Mr. George Morgan says: "He had been obliged to give up his Latin and Greek at William and Mary, but he had gone to an infinitely better school than that honored institution. . . . The great school of debate and armed conflict between crown and continent." No doubt the battles of Har-



lem Heights, White Plains, Princeton, and Trenton had made him less shy of girls than he had been when first thrown into their society at Williamsburg. John Habberton, in his memoirs, says that Monroe, after the battle of Trenton, was "an eighteen-year-old Virginia boy who grew a great deal that morning."

Monroe entered the service of his country as a cadet in the Third Virginia Regiment under the command of General Mercer. Soon after, he was made lieutenant, and there came a long summer march north in the hot August of 1776. December of that same year saw the most notable adventure in Monroe's soldier life, which had its proper setting in the retreat of the Continental Army from the Hudson. It was a never-to-be-forgotten December, with its darkness, its cold, its ice and snow, and its disaster. It has lived in the hearts of men and women ever since, and will go on living as long as there is an America and an American to proclaim it. Brandywine, Germantown, and Monmouth came later, but Trenton was where Monroe, with Captain William Washington, the nephew of General Washington, made the famous dash down King Street and took two brass three-pounders of the Rall regiment. Captain Washington was wounded in both hands, and Lieutenant Monroe was hit in the shoulder by a bullet that cut an artery and is said to have remained in his shoulder as long as he lived.

Washington's main rendezvous on this famous retreat of the Continental Army had been in the riverside township of Bucks, Pennsylvania. After the

same county. Monroe, under the care of a surgeon, was taken to the residence of William Neely, of Neely's Mill, where he had found quarters before the battle. Later he was removed to the house of Judge Wynkoop near Newtown. He could not have fallen into more friendly hands, as the Holland Dutch Wynkoops were noted patriots—"no better to be found in all Bucks County." It was no more than was to be expected in these gloomy times that sentiment should run high. One does not much blame the fair Christine, Judge Wynkoop's daughter, even though she was promised to another, for transferring her affection, for a time, to the lanky youth with the blue-gray eyes and the kind, if homely, features, who had been brought wounded to her home. Monroe, not yet nineteen, must have felt, on his invalid couch, that it was worth the rugged toils of war to know so enchanting a maiden.

As soon as Monroe recovered from the wound received at Trenton, he rejoined the army, and "thereafter participated in the marches and manœuvres of General Washington's troops during the long period preceding the battle of Brandywine." After Monmouth, failing to get his field commission—owing mainly to the exhausted state of Virginia's finances—Monroe returned to Williamsburg, where he found many changes brought about by the demoralizing influences of war. He consulted his uncle, Mr. Joseph Jones, upon the subject of his future, and upon his advice took up the study of law under Thomas Jefferson. That he did not readily forget his love for the pretty little Dutch maiden, who had refused to become his wife because she was already

pledged, is shown by a letter he wrote to Lord Sterling in 1782, at the beginning of his political career.

“Believe,” he wrote, “I have always been happy to hear from you. For my part, till very lately, I have been a recluse. Chagrined at my disappointment in not attaining the rank and command I sought, and chagrined at some disappointment in a private line, I retired from society with almost the resolution not to enter it again.”

In 1783 Monroe was elected a member of the Fourth Continental Congress, and he was twice re-elected, making his congressional service a period of three years. During this time he must have met Miss Eliza Kortright, as Mr. George Morgan, in his biography of Monroe, quotes a letter written by the latter to Mr. Jefferson, dated May 11, 1786, in which he tells this valued friend of his marriage, which—according to the letter—took place in February of that year. Other authorities give 1789 as the year of the marriage, but so many other events in Monroe’s life confirm the earlier marriage date that 1786 is the generally accepted time.

When and how he met his wife can only be surmised, as history gives no details about this interesting event. Fancy, of course, can paint a most charming romance between Monroe and this attractive daughter of a Captain in the British Army, against which he had so nobly fought.

Mr. Morgan gives *Old Merchants of New York City*, by Walter Barrett, as an authority for the statement that Mrs. Monroe’s father was Lawrence Kortright, second son of the famous widow, Hester



ELIZA KORTRIGHT MONROE  
(*Mrs. James Monroe*)



Cannon Kortright. A beautiful and much-courted woman, she yet refused all offers of marriage after her husband had his brains dashed out when a high wind drove his brig violently against the wharf while he was trying to close a cabin window. She was one of America's first emancipated women, as she went into business for herself, reared her family, and survived the burning of her house over her head by the British. She lived until 1784—"two years before Monroe married her granddaughter, Elizabeth."

Mr. Morgan refers to Mrs. Monroe as "Elizabeth," but all others who write of her use "Eliza," the older and more austere form of the name. Still, judging from a miniature painted on ivory by the celebrated miniaturist, Séne, while Mr. Monroe was in Paris, she was altogether too lovely for any except the most flexible of names. In full, sheer, princess frock, one slender hand touching the lace kerchief about her lovely shoulders, her classic features stand out framed in a cascade of dark curls held back by a band of soft ribbon. It is said that this miniature was a true likeness, and that Mr. Monroe was very fond of it.

Eliza Kortright was born in New York City, probably in one of those square Georgian houses with stately fan-top doors so different from the weather-cock gables of the Dutch houses. Her father, Lawrence Kortright, married Hannah Aspinwell, and had one son and four daughters. After the Revolution, Lawrence Kortright entered mercantile life and became a commercial magnate. He was one of those who founded the New York Chamber of Commerce in 1770.

New York society seems to have had a strong attraction for young men in the government service, and the names of more than one member of Congress from other States is given in the Memorial History of that city as having found their future partners within its charmed circle. Aside from Monroe's high standing as a delegate to Congress, he had various recommendations to the good graces of hospitable New Yorkers. His time spent there was delightful and broadening, since he was much in the company of men with a broad horizon. One of Mrs. Monroe's sisters married Nicholas Gouverneur, a second, Thomas Knox, and a third, Captain Heyleger. From these people he heard and learned much about Spanish America and the West Indies.

Soon after Monroe's marriage, he wrote to his uncle, Judge Jones, and to Mr. Jefferson, that, though his private affairs were all that he could wish them to be, he was dissatisfied with the progress of public events. And he decided, after his fourth year in Congress, to return to Virginia and to settle to the practice of law, which his entrance into public life so soon after his mastery of that profession had prevented him from continuing. This, no doubt, was a time of difficulty for Mrs. Monroe, as she had to leave all her friends in the North for new surroundings and strange people—people, perhaps, somewhat hostile, since her father had been a captain in the hated English Army.

Mr. Monroe made his home in Fredericksburg. While he was practising law there, he rode on the circuit with judges as far as Staunton and Charlottesville. It is said that Mrs. Monroe and his small

daughter rode with him on many of these professional excursions. She especially enjoyed the beauties of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the views from the heights of the Shenandoah, always gleaming like silver in the sun. Frequent letters from Mr. Madison and Mr. Jefferson kept Monroe informed at this time as to Federal aggression and republican perils, and also gave him the news of Philadelphia and New York. In one of his replies to Mr. Madison, one sees something of Mrs. Monroe's feeling about being so far from her kindred. "We feel ourselves greatly indebted to you for your kindness in giving us intelligence from our friends—we never hear from them, except when you extract a line. It revives Mrs. M.'s spirits, which from long absence are often depressed." And he mentions the cost and handicaps of a journey north—"else Mrs. Monroe would visit the city."

In 1790, when United States Senator Grayson died, Monroe's name was put forward for the vacant senatorship. He wrote to Jefferson, telling him that after mature reflection he had decided to let his name be used in the coming election of the Virginia Legislature. Should he be elected, he wrote, "it will contribute greatly to my own and Mrs. M.'s gratification, as it will place both with and near our friends." Monroe was duly elected, and at the age of thirty-two he resumed his activity in the political world. He moved from Fredericksburg to Philadelphia, where he took the oath of office as United States Senator from Virginia in the third session of the First Congress.

It is much to be regretted that no biographer of



Mrs. Monroe's day anticipated the needs of a coming generation. An impartial account of this woman and of others like her, who stamped the virtues of their time so indelibly on this Republic, would be a noble legacy to posterity. The richest treasure of our country, as Laura Carter Holloway has said, is certainly the fame of her children, "who by their talents have adorned, and by their wisdom sustained the pioneers of liberty in their first efforts." Of these was Mrs. Monroe. We are told that she was tall and gracefully formed, gentle and winning of manners, and possessed of a polished elegance that fitted her to represent her countrywomen at any court of Europe.

As wife of the Virginia senator, she was proud of her dignified, sagacious husband, and proud of her country; and she fully shared his ambition, his enthusiasm, and his admiration for the principles of a free government, whose liberty he was so potent in helping to establish. And in no act of her life did she more fully display how entirely she shared the feeling of her husband than in her visit to Madame Lafayette.

Lafayette had been taken prisoner by the Austrians in 1792, and thrown like a criminal into the Prussian dungeon. His estates were confiscated and his wife imprisoned at La Force. Every one knows how this defender of American liberty was adored by Americans. It was only natural for Monroe, when he became minister to France, to be greatly moved by the suffering and indignities heaped upon Madame Lafayette. Since America, by her success, had assumed a somewhat lofty position among the

nations, her ministers commanded special attention and regard. So Monroe decided to risk the displeasure any meddling in foreign affairs might incur, and send Mrs. Monroe to visit Madame Lafayette. He appreciated the decided effect this visit would have for good or for evil, and, with trepidation, consulted Mrs. Monroe in regard to the plan, only to be assured by her that she was ready and anxious to co-operate. Thus it happened that the carriage of the American Minister halted before the entrance to the prison of La Force, on the day appointed for Madame Lafayette to die.

It is a thrilling picture: this beautiful young American woman, scarcely more than a girl at that time, leaving her carriage with a firm step, and in a steady voice making known the object of her visit to the keeper of the prison. No doubt her heart beat loudly as she listened to the jailer's departure. All day Madame Lafayette had been expecting the summons to prepare for her execution, as it had been decided that she was to be beheaded that afternoon. Her emotion was touching in the extreme when, assisted by her guard, she was conducted, an emaciated prisoner, into the presence of her visitor. Unable to articulate her joy, she could only sink at the feet of Mrs. Monroe, and let her long-suppressed feelings find relief in sobs.

The presence of sentinels precluded any effort at conversation. After a brief painful stay Mrs. Monroe arose to leave, assuring the pitiful Madame, in a voice audible to her listeners, that she would call again the following morning. This visit, as every student of history knows, altered the minds of the

officials of France, and Madame Lafayette was set at liberty. Though Monroe was soon afterward recalled from France, there is every evidence that the privilege of helping Madame Lafayette satisfied Mrs. Monroe much more than did ministerial honors; and the comfort of her husband's life was that she would have preferred to perform this deed, prompted by him, than to remain the wife of an Ambassador. Later, the man she so much loved and honored redeemed all political indiscretions, was again appointed as minister abroad, became Secretary of State, and served two full terms as President.

## CHAPTER VI

### JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

(1825-1829)

MR. JOHN T. MORSE, in his "American Statesmen" series, says that if heredity counts for anything, John Quincy Adams began life with every chance to become famous. Two streams of as good blood as flowed in the colony mingled in his veins. He was the product of many generations of simple, devout, intelligent Puritan ancestors. He lived in a community that loved virtue and sought knowledge, and all his inherited influences combined to make him sensible. His small face took on a look of thought when it should have worn only careless, happy smiles; and all his leading traits of character are said to have been as strongly marked at seven as they were at seventy. At an age when most young people are winning love, or causing annoyance to others, he was preferring wisdom to both love and mischief.

Born into an atmosphere already warm and rapidly growing warmer with colonial patriotism, love of freedom, and hatred of British oppression, John Quincy Adams's mental activities received unconscious but uncommon stimulus. From the time he learned to talk and to understand the talk of those about him, his character was moulded by the intense

excitement of stormy times, and he obtained a premature knowledge of public affairs.

At seven years of age he climbed Penn's Hill with his mother, to watch the burning of Charlestown; and on the same spot he heard the thunder of cannon and saw the rising smoke that marked the battle of Bunker Hill. The impression made upon his young mind by this spectacle was intensified by other hours that he spent on that hill, watching the siege and bombardment of Boston. Can one wonder that his childish face forgot to dimple into smiles?

With his father, John Adams, in Congress, Quincy became a "post-rider" by the time he was nine, for he rode his horse to Boston every day, a distance of eleven miles, that his mother and the neighbors might get the latest news regularly. When he was but ten years old his father took him with him on his mission to France; and by the time he was twelve he had crossed the ocean four times. The ships he crossed in were not much more than leaky tubs, which had to run the British blockade. Once he suffered shipwreck on the Spanish coast.

How different was Quincy Adams's early boyhood from that of his father! Both were crowded with responsibility and man-making tasks, yet John Adams, despite his farm work and his study, found the time to fish, to hunt, and to cut capers on the ice to impress the small girls of his acquaintance. If Quincy Adams knew any girls other than his sister, one does not find them mentioned in any of his boyhood writings.

Mr. Morse gives, in his biography, a letter written by Quincy Adams to his mother soon after he arrived

in France on the occasion of his first voyage. In this letter he tells his mother that his father enjoins upon him to keep a journal, or diary, of the events that happen to him. Most persons will agree with Mr. Morse that if a lad of eleven years should write such a solemn effusion at the present day, "he would either be set down, and justly enough, as a young prig, or as a prematurely developed hypocrite." Yet John Quincy Adams's life shows very little of the prig and nothing of the hypocrite, as any one may learn who makes the acquaintance of the man in that full, vivid, and picturesque diary that he bequeathed to posterity. This portrait of himself he began in 1779 and continued until 1848, with astonishing persistency and faithfulness throughout a busy life. For almost seventy years he was writing this immense work which, though abridged in the printing, ranks among the half-dozen longest diaries in the world. In its pages one meets both the great and the small among the public men of Quincy Adams's day, and finds many interesting and colorful side-lights thrown upon persons and events. The fullness and the faithfulness with which the diary was kept are highly characteristic of the most persevering and industrious of men, as he showed himself to be by the many things he accomplished.

Mr. William O. Stoddard says that John Quincy Adams learned his letters in the Braintree village school. If so, that was quite as far as such schooling went. His mother, no doubt, taught him reading and writing until he went abroad. Then he began to learn in that larger school of experience where, even at this early age, he mingled in very

distinguished society. "For a brief period he got a little schooling, first in Paris, next at Amsterdam, and finally at Leyden," says Mr. Morse.

At fourteen, this "mature youngster" became secretary of the American legation in Russia; and by the time he was seventeen he had travelled over the greater part of Europe. The glimpses one gets of him during these formative years show him associating upon equal terms with men of marked ability, midst the temptations of the gayest capital in the world.

When his father was appointed Minister to the Court of St. James in 1785, it was necessary for Quincy Adams to determine his own career. Nothing in all his life ever made him stand out more strikingly as a singular young man than did his choice of the course he decided to follow. Had he gone with his father to England, it would have been his privilege to enjoy a life fitted to his natural and acquired taste; he would have continued to mingle with men who were making history; he would have been cognizant of the most important public affairs; and he would have greatly profited by all the advantages of the grandest city in the world. It has already been said that he was the outcome of a time and heritage that made him not only sensible but courageous. His sense and courage made him turn his back on that brilliant prospect and go home to the almost barren shores and small society of the New England of that day, "to enter Harvard College and come under all its petty regulations at that time."

The degree he wanted so much from Harvard Col-

lege he obtained in 1787. He then went to Newburyport, where he entered as a law student the office of a Mr. Parsons. Three years later, at the age of twenty-three, he was admitted to the practice of law, and established himself in Boston. Clients were slow in coming the first year, but with stubborn patience he waited, and in the second, third, and fourth years his business grew to encouraging dimensions. During this period he wrote for the press a series of articles, which showed so much political sagacity that they were supposed to have been written by his father; and it is almost certain that to these articles was due his nomination by President Washington as Minister Resident at The Hague. This change from a moderate law practice in Boston to a European court, the charm of which he knew so well, must have been very welcome to Quincy Adams. But more awaited him there than he guessed. For we come now to the time when Cupid, so dilatory in this case, at last penetrated the heart of this singular, sensible young man.

“An episode in his life at The Hague,” says Mr. Morse, “was his visit to England, where he was directed to exchange ratifications of the treaty lately negotiated by Mr. Jay.” He was unexpectedly detained in London, and while there he met Miss Louisa Catherine Johnson. She was the daughter of Joshua Johnson, the American Consul, and niece of Governor Johnson of Maryland, signer of the Declaration of Independence, and afterward appointed to the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States.

Miss Johnson was born in London on February



the 12th, 1775. Her father, although living in England at the outbreak of the Revolution, was a warmly patriotic American, and moved with his family to Nantes, France. "There he received from the Federal Congress an appointment as commissioner to examine the accounts of all the American functionaries then trusted with public money of the United States in Europe; and in the exercise of these duties he continued until the peace of 1782. Our National Independence having then been recognized, he returned to London, where he acted as consular agent for the United States until his final return to his native soil in 1797."

Mr. Adams met Miss Johnson in her father's home. The belief that opposites attract was certainly confirmed in the case of these two. The precise, cold, austere New England Puritan could no longer crowd love out of his life; he was completely won in a few months by the petite, warm-hearted, gracious-mannered Louisa Johnson. We are told that she was never spoken of as beautiful, but that she possessed that higher quality, charm, to an enviable degree; and having spent the greater part of her girlhood in London, where she had unusual educational advantages, she was a most fitting companion and helpmate for the cultured young diplomat.

A picture of John Quincy Adams at this time shows a very handsome young man in scholarly dress, with high-bred, classical features, expressing the spotless honesty and courage which he so industriously maintained throughout life. When he gave his affection to Miss Johnson, she found it of the

same strong, sturdy quality as was every other attribute ascribed to him; and their intimacy soon ripened into an engagement. They were married on July 26, 1797, in the Church of All-Hallows. Soon after, Mr. Adams took his bride to the Court of Berlin, to which capital he had recently been promoted. On arriving in Prussia he had a most embarrassing experience, as a result of being the first American minister to be sent there. "He was questioned at the gate by a dapper lieutenant, who did not know, until one of his private soldiers explained to him, what the United States of America were."

Here his bride proved perfectly competent to play her part in the higher circles of social and political life; and during the four years of her stay at that court, she was successful in making friends and in winning a large degree of good will. She was proficient in many accomplishments, as one may learn from a letter written by a member of her family, and it can be readily understood that she would be a success at any court, and a credit to the country she represented. "She wrote much and read a great deal more, both of French and English literature, and translated from the former for the amusement of her friends. She also wrote verse frequently in the same way." It was mentioned that she possessed a "nice taste in music and a well-cultivated voice." It is easy to see her attraction for Adams, but it was her husband's strong nature and his cultivated intellect with which she fell in love, and which satisfied and sustained her and rendered her perfectly happy.

In 1801, after the birth of her first child, she came

to America with Mr. Adams, but not to the Maryland home of her parents. Her husband settled again in Boston to resume his law practice, and she determined to be satisfied and to live in harmony in New England among his family and relatives. She was scarcely beginning to feel at home, though, when Mr. Adams was elected senator, and they had to move to Washington. This was a happy move for her, as she had a sister living there, and she would be much nearer to her parents and her other relatives in Maryland. During the eight years of Mr. Jefferson's term she passed every winter in Washington, and returned with Mr. Adams to Boston for each summer. Then Mr. Madison became President, and called her husband to sail as the first accredited minister to Russia. This called for great resolution on the part of Mrs. Adams, as she preferred the uncertainty of exile in a foreign country to separation from her husband. So leaving her two eldest children with their grandparents, she took her third child, a baby of two years, and accompanied him.

Up to this time, Lydia L. Gordon tells us, Russia, with its Peter, its Catherines, and the mad Paul, had hardly been considered within the pale of civilized countries; but under the chivalrous, youthful Alexander, she was taking a prominent place in the stately march of European nations. His court was maintained in the most princely manner, but Mr. and Mrs. Adams lived there as quietly as their official position would allow. There was laid the foundation of their fortune, as well as the foundation of amicable relations between Russia and America.

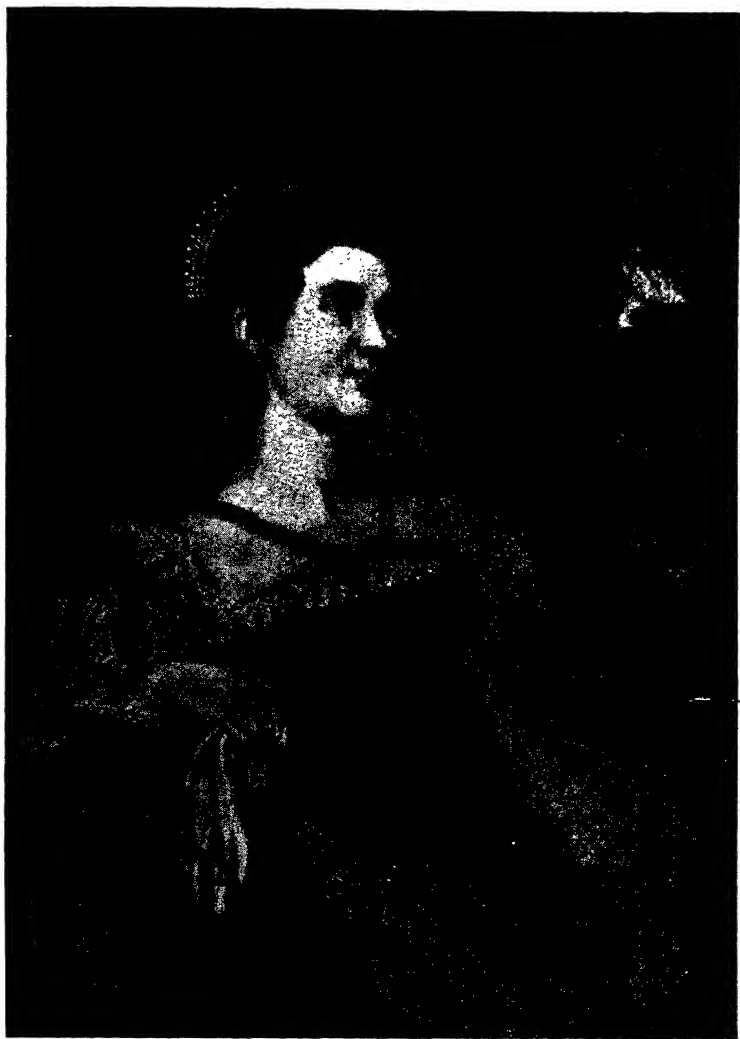
What wondrous things happened in the six years

that these two scholarly Americans spent in Russia! The era was marked by such vital events that it is hard for this generation to conceive of its import. The great wars of Napoleon were constantly increasing the concern of mankind, and feelings waxed stronger as it grew daily more likely that Russia would be invaded. Death took from Mrs. Adams the only daughter ever born to her, and the twofold affliction of public and private trouble weighed heavily upon her. During her stay in Russia, the battle of Borodino and the burning of Moscow took place, and every ear was strained, listening, lest the conqueror should knock at the gates of St. Petersburg.

Meanwhile, war between England and America had broken out, and besides the sorrow Mrs. Adams suffered over the loss of the daughter that was born and died in Russia, she had to endure the loss of all communication between herself and her children in America. As all the world knows, Europe grew calm only when Napoleon was banished to Elba; yet the war between England and America continued to drag on wearily. Alexander offered to mediate and to try to bring about peace. Commissioners came, but negotiations failed. England, apparently from petty jealousy, refused to act in concert with Russia. Now came the greatest trial of Mrs. Adams's stay in her cheerless abode in that far-off northern climate. With thrones rocking and Europe unsettled, Mr. Adams thought it better for her to remain in Russia while he went to Ghent for the second mediation of a treaty. Weary and long were those winter days and nights for Mrs. Adams. The joy

of the news that was brought to her on that Christmas Eve in 1814 can only be imagined by those who have endured the sufferings of loneliness. The treaty was signed on the 24th of December, and Mr. Adams was permitted to go on to Paris, where he summoned his wife to join him. But her troubles were by no means over. The splendid courage of this woman is nowhere better displayed than in her trip from St. Petersburg to Paris, accompanied only by servants and by her eight-year-old son.

She was advised to travel by land. Hers was an indomitable spirit, else the awful days of constant travel through wild, uncultivated country, infested by lawless disbanded soldiers of the worst class, would have intimidated her. With a passport from the Russian Government, and with the strong recommendation of being the American Minister's wife, she bade adieu to apprehensions and risked all to get nearer to her husband, her home, and her children. In Courland they were caught in a snowdrift at night, and had to rouse the peasants of the surrounding country to shovel them out; at every stopping place Mrs. Adams was told stories of robbery and murder; then came the news "that startled all Europe—Napoleon had escaped from Elba. Crowned heads, nobles, and peasants sprang to arms, and for the rest of the way every step was dangerous, and even a Polish cap on the head of a servant was enough to start a quarrel." When she reached the frontier of France, Napoleon was making his seven-hundred-mile march to the capital. His name was a terror to her Russian servants, and not one of them would cross the border. Once she was surrounded



LOUISA JOHNSON ADAMS  
(*Mrs. John Quincy Adams*)



by troops so inflamed that not even a woman could pass without declaring her political faith and her purpose. She appealed to the commander of the detachment, and, following his advice she was enabled to reach Paris by a longer road.

It was Mrs. Adams's privilege to witness the adoration of the French people for their Emperor. One doubts if she felt a greater thrill when her own husband was proclaimed President of the United States than was inspired by the rejoicing with which Napoleon's appearance at a window of the balcony of the Tuileries was greeted. "Never was there such a scene in history," says one writer, "and it was worth years of pain to listen to the myriad voices shouting their *Vive l'Empéreur!*"

Such advantages thrown in the way of an American woman were justly appreciated by Mrs. Adams. But the arrival in England of her children, from whom she had been separated for almost six years, was of much more interest to her than were the events of the famous "hundred days." She and Mr. Adams started for London. They arrived on May 25, 1815, to find awaiting them Mr. Adams's commission as Minister to the Court of St. James. Mrs. Adams, having been born in London, had advantages that scarcely any other American woman ever had. Although she was not wealthy enough to make a display, her home is said to have been one of pleasant comfort; and enjoying, as she did, the society of one of the most intelligent of men and of the best-informed circle in the great capital, she had singular opportunities to improve her own culture.

Charles King, in his eulogy on John Quincy



Adams, had this to say of a visit paid to Mr. Adams's home in London while the latter was United States Minister to England: "It was my good fortune to be admitted to his intimacy and friendship. . . . I found in his home an ever-kind welcome, and intercourse of unfailing attraction and improvement. Under an exterior of, at times, almost repulsive coldness, dwelt a heart as warm, sympathies as quick, and affections as overflowing, as ever animated any bosom. His tastes were all refined. Literature and art were familiar and dear to him, and hence it was that his society was at once so agreeable and improving. At his hospitable board, I have listened to disquisitions from his lips on poetry, especially the dramas of Shakespeare, music, painting, sculpture, of rare excellence, and its accuracy in all branches was not less remarkable than the complete command which he appeared to possess over all his varied stores of learning and information."

Mr. James Morgan states that the career of John Quincy Adams would be impossible in these times of organized politics. Without a party, without a faction, without an organized following, almost without a friend, "this hermit among statesmen received the highest diplomatic post, was called to the head of the cabinet, won the Presidency, and held a seat in Congress sixteen years." And through all the honors, misfortunes, and hard political battles, his only romance was with Louisa Johnson Adams. They were lovers all the years of their married life, and in death she was at his side. Overcome on the floor of Congress by a stroke of paralysis, hers was the only name he called when he recovered a

gleam of consciousness. Though ill herself, she went to him. Sustained by near relatives, she remained beside the sofa on which he had been removed to the Speaker's room, where he breathed out the last two days of his life.

## CHAPTER VII

### ANDREW JACKSON

(1829-1837)

ANDREW JACKSON was the first President to be born in a log cabin. A few days before his birth, his mother and two small brothers rode into the Waxhaw Settlement, on the boundary line between the Carolinas, in the same wagon with the coffin that held his father's body for burial. After the interment in the churchyard of the log meeting-house, Mrs. Jackson went to the home of a brother-in-law, where, on March 15, 1767, Andrew Jackson was born.

The Jacksons were Scotch-Irish emigrants who, with two small sons, had sailed from Carrickfergus in North Ireland, two years before. The mother was Elizabeth Hutchinson, a linen weaver's daughter, and her husband was a poor Ulsterman. The task of clearing land of virgin forest is no easy one, but Jackson tackled it with fortitude and tenacity. Soon he had a cabin built in this land of promise, and a few acres of wild ground cleared. It was easy for them to live, as the soil was good, the climate genial, and there was plenty of fish and game. They raised a crop of corn and vegetables the first year, and the second winter more land was cleared, preparatory to raising larger crops. But death overtook Jackson in the midst of his manly efforts to hew out a home for his family.

Mrs. Jackson never returned to the cabin after her husband's burial. From the home of George McCamie (also spelled McKemey), she went to live with another brother-in-law, Mr. Crawford, as soon after the birth of Andrew as she was able. Her sister, Mrs. Crawford, was an invalid, who had come over to America with her husband in the same ship with Mrs. Jackson. In her home she could earn a living for herself and for her youngest children. She became Mr. Crawford's housekeeper, and Hugh, her eldest child, remained with his uncle, George McCamie.

To these relatives and to their kith and kin, Mrs. Jackson was known as "Aunt Bettie." There are many testimonials as to her benevolence, her thrift, and her constancy of character. Mr. William O. Stoddard states that she took excellent care of Mr. Crawford's home, and that his farming prospered under her able assistant management. Hugh and Robert grew fast, and were soon able to make their own way by working on the farms of their uncles—"but not so with the infant, Andrew. All he appeared to grow into was a spirit of mischief. Those who knew him at that time could remember little else of him years later than his peculiar capacity for getting into scrapes."

In spite of this, Mrs. Jackson was ambitious for him to become a minister, and she began to teach him to read before he was five. When he was seven, she started him to the Waxhaw Settlement school, but for Andrew school only meant more boys to play with and to fight with, more mischief to get into, and an unlimited amount of rural slang to acquire. He

seems to have been born with the protective urge as an overmastering characteristic, and he established himself a champion of small boys against big bullies. He grew tall and slim, with a toughness and an agility harder to battle against than mere physical strength. His gameness of spirit was such that no matter how hard or how often another boy might throw him, he was ever ready to try it again. This, as well as his recklessness and his fierce temper, made the settlement boys quite ready to keep peace with him.

In 1776 a Dr. David Humphries opened a sort of academy in the Waxhaw Settlement, and Mrs. Jackson saw a way of realizing her ambition for Andrew to become a minister. She sent him to this school until the Revolutionary War swept down upon the Carolinas. That was the first school to make any great impression upon Andrew Jackson. It filled his soul with a passionate devotion to his country and with a flaming hatred of its enemies that lasted to the day of his death.

The Scotch-Irish people of his part of the Carolinas were divided into two strong political parties, Whig and Tory. Volunteers to both armies went from the Catawba section, leaving behind them families in which the great conflict created an added feud in the war of raiding bands, hunting one another through the wild forest and leaving behind them trails made red by blood and flame. Into this mad strife Andrew Jackson was plunged before he was fourteen. He witnessed two battles of the Revolution, and took part in one skirmish. He and his brother, Robert, were captured while helping to

defend a neighbor's house. A lieutenant of Tarleton's Light Dragoons ordered Andrew to clean his muddy boots; the boy refused, and received a saber cut across his temple that might have killed him had he not thrown up his arm and caught part of the blow on his wrist. His brother was also wounded, and both were thrown into the prison-pen at Camden. His mother knew a Waxhaw partisan leader who had picked up some British stragglers, and after two months she managed to arrange an exchange of these for her two sons and five other Waxhaw Settlement men.

She walked, it is said, the forty miles to Camden, and found her boys still suffering from their undressed wounds, half starved, and ill with smallpox. She obtained a horse, somehow, and put Robert in the saddle, as he was much sicker than Andrew; then she walked the long way back to Waxhaw beside the horse, to keep Robert from falling off. Andrew staggered after her. All would have gone well had not a storm overtaken them before they reached home. The wetting finished, for Robert, the work of the Camden prison-pen and the smallpox, for he died two days later. Andrew had a long, doubtful struggle for life, which might have ended in the same way but for the battle his brave mother put up for his recovery.

No sooner was Andrew sufficiently improved for his mother to leave him with relatives, than she planned another errand of mercy. Word had come to Waxhaw that hundreds of captives were rotting of yellow fever on the British prison-ships in Charleston Harbor. Whether she rode or walked the

one hundred and eighty miles of perilous road to Charleston is not known, but go she did, on behalf of other mothers,—her kindred and her neighbors. She did what she could to cheer and nurse the soldiers. When all were more comfortable, and some on the way to recovery, she started for home, only to be prostrated herself at the home of a relative, Mr. William Barton, two and a half miles from Charleston. The ship-fever had entered her veins, and after a brief illness she died. Her grave, like those of other victims of the pestilence, was made in an open field.

The Revolution had cost Andrew Jackson his two brothers and his mother. He himself had suffered brutal outrage and cruel hardship when a helpless prisoner, and for all these things he ever afterward hated the British. The love of his mother was a prodigal idolatry that only natures as primitive, as strong, and as fearless as his could feel. After her death, her memory became a shrine upon which to offer every sacrifice. The great passion of his life became the avenging of her wrongs, and the wrongs of all women who crossed his path.

The next five years of Andrew Jackson's life may be passed over briefly. He worked at the saddler's trade with a relative for a year after his mother's death. During that time he read every book and pamphlet he could find. This relative, a Mr. White, was local magistrate as well as saddler, and he owned a book of law forms and rules of common practice. Andrew learned this book by heart, and made up his mind to study law. "It was an auspicious moment," says Mr. Gerald Johnson, writing of Jackson. "The

peace of 1783 had swept the Tory barristers from the courtroom and flooded the surviving Whig lawyers with more business than they could handle." Law was also a promising career, in those days, as an open road to political preferment. Technical examinations were relatively easy, and educational qualifications were practically non-existent. Because of this, Jackson's resolve to become a lawyer was by no means absurd. Since pedagogy was not a profession in the South at that time, but a sort of stop-gap for any one sufficiently familiar with the three R's to impart them, Jackson turned to school-teaching as the first step toward the study of law.

He bade good-bye to the Waxhaw Settlement forever, and rode seventy-five miles to Salisbury, North Carolina. He entered the law office of Spruce McKay, and for the next three years he studied law, attended old Queen's College at Charlotte, and taught school at intervals to earn expenses. He was admitted to the bar at the spring term of the superior court of North Carolina, just after he had passed his twentieth birthday.

There being no opening for him to practise in Salisbury, he went to Martinsville in Guilford County; but there is no trace of any attempt on his part to practise law there. The State of Tennessee was being reorganized, with reference to law practice, as the Western District of North Carolina. Early in the year 1788, Jackson was made public prosecutor for this District.

The first law office of Andrew Jackson was as unpretending, says Mr. Buell, as his early practice was adventurous. When he arrived in Nashville, he



found board and lodging at the home of Mrs. Donelson, the widow of Colonel John Donelson, a pioneer of Tennessee. Three years before Jackson's arrival Colonel Donelson had been found shot to death in the woods, but whether by savage or by vagabond white man was never known. The Donelson home was a strongly built blockhouse, with two or three smaller log houses near the main residence, arranged as a sort of fort for protection against the Indians. In one of the smaller houses Jackson and another young lawyer by the name of Overton took up their abode, and had their meals with Mrs. Donelson.

The family of Mrs. Donelson consisted of her son, Samuel; her daughter, Mrs. Hay; another daughter, Rachel Robards; the latter's husband, Lewis Robards; and Mary Donelson, who later became the wife of General Coffee. Some claim that Colonel Donelson was a wealthy Virginia surveyor, and others that he was a backwoodsman. However, historians agree he was a very brave man, and that he left his family in good circumstances, so that there was no need for his wife to take boarders. It was more for protection than otherwise that Mrs. Donelson thought it well to have men in the smaller cabins, as her blockhouse was much exposed to Indian attacks, situated, as it was, quite a distance from the center of the village.

Rachel had been a girl of twelve when her father was heading the party of emigrants from Virginia. She is said to have been a pretty, black-eyed, brown-skinned girl, full of vivacity, and equally capable of taking the helm or leading a dance on the flatboat. At the mouth of the Ohio the dangers that were

encountered, both from the perils of the Indians along the banks and from the swift, swirling streams, struck terror to the hearts of some of the party as they sailed down the Mississippi to Natchez. It was to those people that Rachel Donelson went, a few years later, to escape her disagreeable, jealous husband.

Amid the surroundings of the hard pioneer life, Rachel Donelson sprang to womanhood. When Jackson met her she was Mrs. Robards, a handsome woman of the buxom brunette type, fond of dancing and of gay society, and perfectly at home in the saddle. The scarcity of crops during the first year or two after her father had settled at Nashville had caused him to move his family to Kentucky, where food was more abundant; and there Lewis Robards, a young backwoodsman, saw and admired Rachel. They were married after a short courtship, and Robards took her to his mother's log-cabin home. But the romance was of short duration, as love of fun and gaiety, so winning in the girl, was denounced by the husband. Stormy scenes soon began to be the order of their life. He sent her back to her mother before their first married year was out, though it is recorded that his mother took Rachel's part and said that her son had no cause for his jealousy. Of this Lewis Robards was convinced later, and sought a reconciliation with his wife. Her family had moved back to Tennessee, and he followed her there, and was living with her in her mother's home when Jackson and Overton went to board with Mrs. Donelson.

Soon the jealous disposition of Robards was directed toward the six-foot, lank, but not ungrace-

ful figure of Andrew Jackson. The deep-set blue eyes that were said to blaze when turned upon a foe, melted into tenderness when regarding women, for whom he always wore an air of protection.

When it was learned that Robards was making it unpleasant for his wife because Jackson boarded with her mother, the latter went elsewhere to live. But that did not help matters. Jackson soon heard jealous remarks that the husband had made. True to his nature of facing a foe, he sought Robards, and told him, so the story goes, that if he ever again connected his name with Mrs. Robards he would cut his ears from his head.

Jackson's rage, which was never mild, frightened the jealous husband, who slunk away to the office of a justice of the peace and swore out a warrant. Jackson was arrested and taken to court, Robards following in the rear. Before they had gone very far, Jackson asked the loan of a knife from one of the guards. This the guard refused until Jackson promised on his honor not to hurt any one. The knife was then handed to him. He began to examine the edge and to feel the point, while he repeatedly flashed his blazing eyes on Robards. In those wild days, a man dared not rely too much on the protection of the law. Robards soon took to his heels. Jackson ran after him some distance, then came back and walked into court. The case was called, it is said, but as there was no complainant Jackson was discharged.

Again Rachel was deserted, but after a time Robards came back; yet his wife would not listen again to his plea for pardon. To escape him she

planned a visit to Natchez. A sail down the Mississippi was almost as full of danger as had been the voyage Rachel had made, as a child, to Nashville. She had arranged to go with a Colonel Stark, an old man who was preparing to make the rough and dangerous journey. Jackson, feeling deep regret over having been the unintentional cause of so much trouble for Rachel, decided to go with her as an extra protector. Overton, says Mr. Johnson, insists that Colonel Stark urged Jackson to go. "But by this time, if he had not confessed to himself that he was in love with Rachel, he had certainly made her cause completely his cause." And never did Jackson require urging to stand between a woman and danger.

At any rate, he went. Mr. Johnson says that he must have known that, in going, he had at last given Robards something on which to feed his jealousy. This appeared evident from the way in which he received the news, a few months later, that Robards had divorced his wife. It apparently never occurred to Jackson to doubt that the man had sued for a divorce, or that the court had granted it; all that he seemed to desire was to marry Rachel as soon as possible.

Of this marriage, Mr. Buell says, more has been written than about any other that has ever taken place, and for two reasons. The first was that he married a divorced woman in a day when wedlock was regarded as a serious institution, and "the putting asunder by man of what God had joined together was not viewed lightly." The second reason was "that thirty years after the marriage he became the most famous man in America. Leave out either

one of these two circumstances, and the subject would not have taken up more than a paragraph in history."

Nor was this by any means all! There was the additional complication caused by ignorance of, or inattention to, the proceedings of the divorce law itself, "with the result that the marriage began before the divorce ended. . . . Neither Jackson nor his bride had the least suspicion that the divorce was not complete when they married. . . . Both knew by common report and official advertisement that the proceedings required by the laws of Virginia had been instituted; but they did not know that the proceedings instituted had another stage to pass before the record would be complete. In this neglect Jackson was at fault. He was a lawyer, and upon him devolved the responsibility of ascertaining beyond a doubt that, when he married Rachel Donelson Robards, she was not still, in the eyes of the law, the wife of another man."

In studying the life of Jackson one cannot be persuaded that even his worst enemies ever believed that he married his wife wrongfully. It can only be accounted for as one of his rash acts. It was an attempt to vindicate the woman he loved, and what was far more to the point, the woman who loved him! The rugged nature that idolized his dead mother's memory was starved for affection, and his overmastering readiness to assume responsibility rose within him, too strong to resist.

Kentucky was then a part of Virginia, and was governed by the law of that State. In 1790, divorce was exceedingly hard to obtain under the Virginia

law. "First the legislature must pass an act authorizing one or the other of the party to bring suit," then it authorized a court to impanel a jury and to take evidence, and finally it empowered the court and the jury, if the testimony was sufficient, to annul the marriage. It was such an act that the Virginia legislature passed in favor of Lewis Robards, "and the act, pursuant to its own provision, was advertised in the *Kentucky Gazette*." Nothing more was heard of it, and by some "fatuous interpretation never explained," Jackson and Rachel believed that the act authorizing Robards to sue for divorce was as legal as the divorce itself. So they were married in the fall of 1791 at Natchez, and returned to Nashville, where they lived happily as man and wife until December of 1793. Then the one and great sorrow of their devoted lives came in the form of the news that the circuit court of "Mercer County, Kentucky, had just granted a divorce to Lewis Robards under the act of 1791; and that the evidence upon which the court granted the decree was the proof that Rachel Donelson Robards had been living with Andrew Jackson in adultery since their alleged or pretended marriage in November, 1791."

Mr. Buell says that in the strictest sense this was not adultery, but a degree of bigamy that often occurs innocently in cases where parties contract marriage supposing themselves to be single, owing to a long desertion, or to the belief that the husband or the wife is dead. Lydia L. Gordon states that Jackson's face blanched at the news, and that he swore "by the Eternal," his favorite oath, that the woman was his lawful wife before God and man. But he

was prudent. A second time, as soon as he could obtain official verification of the action of the court of Mercer County, Kentucky, Jackson procured a license, and remarried his wife in January, 1794.

We are told that Mrs. Jackson was the first in the social scale of that pioneer time and that she lost no caste by this unfortunate affair. The people of Nashville had heard what she had heard, many of them had read the advertisement published in the *Kentucky Gazette*, and believed, as she believed, that she was free to marry again. "Had Jackson lived the life of a Tennessee planter it might not have mattered, but—alas for the woman his career led to fame!"

They lived together, says Mr. Buell, in extraordinary harmony and happiness for thirty-seven years; yet in some respects it was a marriage that did not tend to external peace. No man dared to allude to the irregularity of it in Jackson's presence. It cost one man his life, and others wounds. Any disapproving comment made upon it embittered Jackson's soul—"none too gentle at best—until at times he became more a ferocious animal than a chivalrous man." He treated his wife with a sort of reverence, as if she were something holy. It was a strange dispensation of fate that such devotion should have been the mainspring of a career of quarrel and violence not exceeded in our history.

"Jackson might have fought duels and he might have had shooting affrays if he had not married Rachel Donelson Robards, but as it was, he had only one affray and fought but one duel that did not grow directly or indirectly out of the scandal and slander



RACHAEL DONELSON ROBARDS JACKSON  
(*Mrs. Andrew Jackson*)





incident to that union." But his domestic life is said to have been ideal. Mrs. Jackson was jovial, as famous a story-teller as her husband, fond of dancing and of riding, and full of anecdotes; she was happy herself, and the source of happiness to all about her.

Jackson devoted himself to the practice of law all over the Territory. In seven years he made twenty-two round trips from Nashville to Jonesboro on horseback, a distance of two hundred miles, most of the way through forests infested with Indians. "It was this constant journeying the length and breadth of the region and his frequent appearance in court at the most important points . . . that gave him his wonderful personal acquaintance with the pioneers—the plain people—and prepared the way for the almost miraculous ascendancy he afterward held over them."

When Tennessee became a State, Jackson was elected as representative to Congress; and the next year he was returned as senator. This life was so distasteful to him, however, that he resigned after one session. The same year, he was appointed Judge of the Supreme Court of the State. He held that office for six years, during which time he was also planter and merchant. He loved the soil, and to see crops grow and live stock flourish under his management and for his profit was his passion to the last days of his life. Mr. Buell says that various writers have assigned diverse reasons for his resignation from the Senate, but the true reason was his great desire to be with his family, and his fondness for the pursuits of industry and thrift.

In 1814, Jackson was appointed brigadier general, and was sent to New Orleans to fight the British. His day had come. All the cruelties he had suffered as a boy at the hands of Tarleton's men were to be avenged in this battle. He met the enemy of twelve thousand strong, trained in the Peninsula and led by Pakenham, who bore the scars of many victories. Jackson had less than six thousand troops of raw militia, some without arms. Yet the rout was complete in twenty-five minutes. British casualties totalled seven hundred killed, including the renowned Pakenham, fourteen hundred wounded, and five hundred prisoners. The city of New Orleans was delirious with joy! If Jackson was a hero before, he was a demigod now. Mrs. Jackson and her little nephew, of whom he was very fond, joined him for his triumphant stay in New Orleans, and much entertaining was done in their honor. It is said that Mrs. Jackson had grown stout and coarse, her dark girlhood beauty having changed to the look of a half-breed; that her speech and costume were homely, and that beside her elegant husband, now an adept in drawing-room manners, she might have been taken for a servant, had it not been for the marked attention the General paid her. In all company and upon all occasions, he gave proof that she was the queen among women for him. The elegant Creoles took the cue, for they made much of her and gave her the topaz jewelry to be seen in her portrait at the Hermitage.

A year later Mrs. Jackson became a member of the Presbyterian Church and proved the sincerity of her religion by a daily life of reverence toward God and

a strict Christian observance of duty toward her fellowmen. To please her, General Jackson built a church on the estate, and his house became a home for all clergymen of her creed. When the church was finished, he built the Hermitage, the finest house in the State, as a gift to his wife. On the occasion of the purchase of Florida in 1821, General Jackson was sent to receive the transfer as governor of the new State, and Mrs. Jackson went with him. The shameless breaking of the Sabbath under Spanish rule filled her with horror. "A Godless land," she wrote her friends, "stores, theaters, and gambling houses all open Sunday the same as any other day." So distressed was she by this lawlessness that General Jackson, to please her, had the place put under strict Puritan rule, and the Sunday before the transfer saw the last of the Spanish order of Sabbath-breaking.

When, in 1824, the General was named one of the four candidates for President, Mrs. Jackson was depressed. "Homebody" that she was, she knew that it would mean a publicity that would bring anything but the peace and comfort of her beloved Hermitage. Neither candidate had the majority required, and the election went to the House of Representatives. Jackson had the greatest number of electoral votes, and he naturally expected the House to decide in his favor; but, through Henry Clay's influence, John Quincy Adams was chosen.

It was Mrs. Jackson's first and only visit to the capital, and the churches and able ministers filled her with delight; yet the amusements of Washington made it an unholy place for her. Her visit was

made at the time when Lafayette was the nation's guest; and he treated her with the most attentive courtesy. He had enjoyed her hospitality at the Hermitage, and had seen her sweetness and benevolence to all about her, and his manner to her was the same as to the most cultured lady of the land.

Mrs. Jackson's real trial, the one that ended her life, began in 1828, when her husband again became a nominee for the presidency. Never was there so bitter a contest. Every newspaper of opposing political faith was filled with the dubious events of Jackson's life. The item that preceded all others was "Marriage Before Divorce." The press started by calling Jackson a murderer, and from that warmed up to the task of vituperation. "Illiterate, imbecile, drunken, lewd, avaricious, a gambler and wastrel, a liar, a homicidal maniac, a bribe-taker, a shyster, a swindler, an atheist and slave-trader," are some of the foul names that gushed unchecked in the American press. Then, says Mr. Johnson, writing of that time, "one creature climbed to a height of infamy that should have made his name as immortal as Iscariot's. He printed a paragraph assailing the good name of Elizabeth Hutchinson Jackson, the mother of Andrew, dead fifty years and dead of ship-fever contracted while nursing soldiers of the Revolution." Mr. Johnson goes on to say, "This broke the iron man. When the newspaper containing that paragraph came into the hands of Andrew Jackson, his defenses were shattered and his weapons fell from his grasp. He sat down and cried like a child." This agony for the General was more than agony for Mrs. Jackson; it wrung her heart and soul with mor-

tification and grief. Loyal in every fiber of her being, she felt that it was through her that the enemy had reached the man whom she loved better than life. It is told that she uttered no word of impatience, but that she was often found in tears. It was not until the victory of the election had been awarded to the military chieftain that the strain told. Andrew Jackson was elected President of the United States, and the excitement, suspense, and suffering occasioned by the campaign was thought to be over. He had tried to keep every abusive paragraph out of Mrs. Jackson's sight, as he had known for several years that the condition of her heart was such as to cause serious anxiety. On December 17th, about six weeks after the election, she suffered an attack of angina pectoris. For sixty hours, during which time the President-elect did not leave her bedside, she writhed in agony, with only occasional relief from pain.

The story goes that after a day's shopping in town, Mrs. Jackson went to the hotel to rest and to wait for her carriage. In the room next to the one in which she sat were two women discussing the circumstances of the recent election, and repeating the abusive epithets and the cruel exaggerations of the marriage. "Adulteress and bigamist" were words that burned into her soul, and by the time she reached home, she was incapable of coherent speech. "Incapable of thought, incapable of anything but pain and more pain," until death relented for a little, and she struggled back out of her blind suffering to a weak consciousness of her surroundings. Even then her last earthly thought was not for herself, but for the Gen-

eral who had not left her bedside for more than ten minutes during all of those sixty unimaginable hours of torture. He must not forget that the citizens of Nashville were giving a great dinner in his honor the next night. It would be fatiguing; he must get some rest. When he refused to leave her, she insisted, and that was her last moment of ease. He kissed her and went into the next room, only to hear a cry that took him rushing back to her. The final spasm had clutched her heart, and her spirit had gone into eternity.

The agony of General Jackson at his wife's death is almost unbelievable. He would not accept the fact that she was dead. He continued to rub her hands and temples, and insisted that the doctor bleed her. When no blood would come, he pleaded for new tests, new restoratives. It was far into the night before he surrendered to the inevitable and let her body be prepared for burial. Even then he remained near, and asked that they spread many blankets, saying pathetically, "If she does come to, she will lay so hard." When she was dressed and resting in her last sleep, he sat beside her, looking into her face, feeling her heart and pulse every few minutes in the desperate hope of some sign of returning life. The rest of that night, and all of the next day, he remained beside her, taking no nourishment except a little coffee brought to him by loving hands.

News of the President-elect's unlooked-for and inconsolable bereavement reached Nashville, and the sad paragraph that appeared in the papers of December 23rd, 1828 cast a gloom over all homes. Neighbors and relatives had thronged the house since

midnight, and now a fresh concourse of friends pressed forward to show their respect. Active preparations that were going forward for the banquet to be given on that day came to a solemn end, and heavily bordered mourning cards were printed, containing the following announcement:

“The committee appointed by the citizens of Nashville to superintend the reception for General Jackson on this day, with feelings of deep regret, announce to the public that Mrs. Jackson departed this life last night, between the hours of ten and eleven o’clock. Respect for the memory of the deceased, and sincere condolence with him on whom this providential affliction has fallen, forbid the manifestations of public regard intended on this day.”

All Nashville refrained from business on the next day, and as many as could rode to the Hermitage, while numbers walked the twelve miles. Mrs. Jackson was interred in the garden of the home she loved so well, and it was a saddening sight to see an old veteran, his head whitened by the hardships he had borne for his country, too exhausted by grief to stand without the support of his friends, while his wife’s body was committed to the grave. But his love story was not over; to the end of his days, sixteen years after her death, his love for her burned as brightly as in the heyday of his youth. He could not take her into the White House with him, but the miniature of her that he wore hidden in his bosom on a chain around his neck, was placed on her Bible beside his bed every night, turned so that her eyes would be the first thing to meet his gaze when he awoke every morning.



## CHAPTER VIII

### MARTIN VAN BUREN

(1837-1841)

IN the little village of Kinderhook on the Hudson River in the State of New York, two children were born to Dutch parents in the years 1782 and 1783, and were destined to become lovers noted in history. They played together under the same trees, they went to the same school, and they set out with all the other lads and maidens on the same canoeing parties or rural excursions, thereby laying the foundation, at a very tender age, for both friendship and that still stronger attachment which was to ripen into a deep and lasting love.

The boy was no child of fortune, but was obliged to make his own way in the world; and, according to William Mackenzie, in his *Life and Times of Martin Van Buren*, he was born in a small log building kept by his father as a tavern, or public house. Other writers claim that Abraham Van Buren, father of the eighth President, was a more prosperous man; and they state that his house was a long, low, clap-boarded one, a story and a half high, containing great rooms furnished with large, comfortable fire-places. They say that Abraham Van Buren was born in such a house, and that he inherited it from his father, along with some land and slaves. Mr. Mackenzie does not mention the slaves, but states that the

tavern was on a farm, and that such a house as is described above was built by Abraham Van Buren on or near the spot which the log shanty had originally occupied, but after Martin Van Buren, his first son, was born. It is unanimously agreed, however, that Abraham Van Buren was a shiftless man, too easy-going for his own good, but liked by every one. His lack of thrift caused all good housewives to warn their daughters against accepting his attentions; and his marriage, late in life, to a widow Van Allen, whose maiden name had been "Mary Goes, otherwise Hoes," is said to have earned him greater esteem in the eyes of the world. Mrs. Van Allen, like Abraham Van Buren, was of pure Dutch descent.

In the correspondence of Mr. B. F. Butler we find that the name of Mary Goes (Hoes), "will be recognized as a name of distinction by those who are familiar with the history of the Netherlands." She is spoken of as an energetic, ambitious woman of more than ordinary sagacity, and there is every probability that it was due to her discerning judgment and able management that the log tavern was turned into a clapboarded one. She had three children, two sons and a daughter, when she married Van Buren, and she bore him five, the first two being girls. Then came Martin. Two other sons were born after him, —Lawrence, who became a farmer in Kinderhook, and Abraham, who became a lawyer and settled in Hudson.

It was near the good feast of St. Nicholas, on December 5, 1782, that Martin Van Buren was born. He was baptized ten days later in the Dutch Reformed Church at Kinderhook. His uncle, Pieter

Van Buren, was a deacon of the Church, and he promised to see that Martin was brought up in the faith of his fathers. As the lad grew older there came the period of merrymakings with jolly companions of the village. The favorite festival of all, New Year's Day, bringing the Dutch rite of kissing all womankind for a happy New Year, began to take on its gratifying meaning. On that day the fountains of hospitality were open, and the whole community was deluged with cherry brandy, true Hollands, and mulled cider. Washington Irving says that every house was a temple of joy, and that many a provident vagabond got drunk out of pure economy, taking in liquor enough gratis to serve half a year afterward. All the good burghers, with their wives and their daughters "pranked" out in their very best attire, visited from house to house from early morning until late evening, the women and girls being kissed in every doorway, the fair Hannah Hoes, Martin's little sweetheart, coming in for as much kissing as the rest, in spite of her shyness.

Not much is known of this lovely girl, born one year after her steadfast lover. She and Martin Van Buren were relatives, as her name, the same as his mother's, indicates. She, too, was born on that charming little headland that the Dutch sailors named Kinderhook; and she should have been as sturdy of body as any of the children of the enterprising Dutch—but, alas! The dread germ of that consuming disease that overtook her in later life must have been sleeping in her system from early childhood, as she was always frail and delicate.

The most remarkable trait of character in Martin



HANNAH HOES VAN BUREN  
(*Mrs. Martin Van Buren*)



Van Buren was his tender attachment to this young relative. It is hard to imagine so great and so lasting a love in the yellow-haired stripling with the merry blue eyes that was Martin in his youth, the "Matt" who loved to talk and was never at a loss for a word, his natural talent being always whetted by the badinage of the patrons of his father's tavern. It did seem a pity that he could not keep on at the village school, where he and his little sweetheart began to learn their letters at about the same time.

The wealth of the tavern keeper was more fancied than real. Abraham Van Buren, always improvident, borrowed money on all that he owned, while a more prosperous tavern began taking away the travelers who once came to him. His good wife, noted for her industry and management, grew more and more concerned over the fate of her family. It began to be plain, as Martin approached adolescence, that the education his mother had hoped to afford her children could not be theirs, except by dint of their own struggles. "Well she knew," says Mr. D. T. Lynch, "that education alone could enable a youth to become like the fine gentlemen who sometimes stopped at the tavern." And with every year the easy-going Abraham became more easy-going, and less and less "mine host" of a prosperous tavern. All hands had to work. The mother and the smaller children took the oxen to the farm, while Matt worked not only at every odd job that he could get, but at dragging through the snow, on winter afternoons when school was out, a sled weighted with the surplus vegetables raised by his mother, to be sold to more fortunate families.

The schoolmaster said that Matt could write better English than any other boy in his class, and it grieved his mother sorely that he should have to labor so hard at so early an age. Yet the light-hearted, fun-loving boy never seemed to mind his hardships. He found time, between his many tasks, always to accompany his youthful sweetheart on the rural excursions of the other young people of the village.

These excursions were made without chaperons. The young people would start early, going often five or more miles into the woods, where wild berries abounded; or they would take a canoe to some beautiful little island, perhaps a sequestered spot on the river, where fishing was good. A basket containing tea, sugar, and bread and butter would be taken, together with utensils for cooking whatever game or fish might be provided by the boys. The girls would gather the wild berries or any other fruit that was in season; if there were none, they brought apple sweetmeats, long sauce, and pumpkin pie. Their work-baskets, too, were taken along as an ingredient necessary to mix with their pleasure, so fixed was the colonial Dutch maiden's habit of industry. When they had arrived at their destination, and had picked the wild berries, if there were any to pick, they sat busily down to their work, singing and conversing with an ease and gaiety inspired by the woodland beauty and the balmy atmosphere, until the boys returned with their fish or game. Then all would be merriment and bustle while the outdoor meal was being prepared. This was eaten with much laughter and talk, accompanied by the shy touching of hands

and the stolen glances of youth's free spirit wooing its mate.

Martin's playtime ended with his short schooling. At the age of fourteen he went into the office of Francis Silvester, a lawyer of his native village, considered a most just and honorable man. Not having the advantage of a college education, the statute required him to study the technical forms of English legal practice for seven years before his examination for admission to the bar. Mr. D. T. Lynch states that Martin's employer was a son of Judge Peter Silvester, "the first lawyer of Kinderhook," that he was a statesman and a jurist, that he married a sister of Peter Van Schaak, and that he was related to nearly every one of importance throughout the countryside. It was considered a high honor to serve as Silvester's law clerk. In this position Martin's duties consisted of sweeping out the office, dusting the furniture and the books, and keeping logs blazing in the fireplace on cold days. "Another task," says Mr. Lynch, "was to sleep in the store of Cornelius Silvester when his clerk was absent for the night. Cornelius was a brother of Francis, kind and generous, and young Van Buren did not lose by slumbering behind stacks of merchandise in the rear of this establishment."

Martin's professional duties for Mr. Silvester were to copy the pleadings in chancery and the less interesting technical forms of common law, to serve papers, and to carry his preceptor's green bag to court. He made his professional debut before he was sixteen, in a tavern at Valatie, a village near Kinderhook, where he happened to be on business for his



office. He had to wait for the trial of a jury case, in which a member of an old Kinderhook family was counsel in action. It was not a very important case, and when the evidence was all in, the counsel turned to the waiting Martin and said: "Here, Matt, you sum up. You may as well begin early." Van Buren was not very tall, and amid the laughter and applause of the court, he was hoisted on a chair and began to sum up the case. Mr. Lynch says that at first his voice was low and faltering, but as he gained confidence he began to speak in the hurried, racing fashion that was later to be the despair of all notetakers.

It is recorded that Martin Van Buren, the boy, answered his own definition of an old-school Dutchman: "immovable, obstinate, and imperturbably good-natured." His appearances in court now became more frequent, and the presence of the yellow-haired boy before a jury no longer excited comment. He earned the merited plaudits of the Republicans of Columbia County when, just after he had turned seventeen, he won a case tried by a justice and a jury in Deyo's tavern, with Elisha Williams as opposing counsel. The Republicans of the county rewarded him a year later by electing him a delegate to the Republican Congressional caucus in Troy. It was known that John P. Van Ness, older brother of Van Buren's friend, Billy Van Ness, would be the choice for Congress at the meeting at Troy. Van Buren was somewhat lionized at this caucus, and his vote for Van Ness's nomination is said to have been greeted with loud huzzas. He canvassed for Van Ness, who was elected. Shortly afterward the new

Congressman married a rich girl, and "returned to Kinderhook in high feather." He advised Van Buren to leave the office of Silvester and to finish his clerkship in a New York City office, under some good Republican. "He told Van Buren to count on him, now that he had a wealthy wife, for any money he might need to finish his clerkship."

Van Buren, who had been eager for a chance to leave Silvester ever since the night they had tried to persuade him to change his politics, was grateful for this offer. He arrived in Manhattan in the fall of 1801. His friend, Billy Van Ness, found him a cheap lodging in Catherine Street, and being unable to find him a clerkship, he took him into his own almost clientless office.

Van Buren's funds ran low while he loitered in the office of Billy Van Ness, and he began to despair of finding a clerkship where clients waited in reception rooms. "Such places were obtained," he afterward said, "only by those with powerful family connections," and his boast was that he had none of these. He began to fear hunger, and finally wrote to the Honorable John P. Van Ness, reminding him of his promise to permit him to draw on him to finish his clerkship. There was no answer for some weeks, and Christmas of that year found Van Buren poorer than ever. The day was like no Christmas he had ever known. A short time later he wrote again to Mr. Van Ness. This time an answer came from Washington, bringing him twenty dollars and a long letter full of much good advice. Shortly afterward, Van Allen, his half-brother, came forward and offered to lend him any money he might need,

and by borrowing from him Martin was able to finish his clerkship without worry.

Van Buren was admitted to the practice of law about three weeks before he reached his twenty-first birthday, and his days of worrying over sustenance and shelter drew to a close. He returned to Kinderhook without delay. It had been two years since he had seen the snow of his native hills, and it had seemed much longer to him since he had seen the timid little girl who was to become his wife. New York had done much for Van Buren; even the hardships he had endured were compensated for by the study he had made, at close range, of politics. He had gained an easy confidence, along with a polish and an elegance, from his association with Billy Van Ness and his friend, Aaron Burr. The yellow-haired boy with something of a slouch, who had left Kinderhook two years before, returned a slender, erect young man with the bearing and carriage of an aristocrat.

It was a happy home-coming. With the useful knowledge Martin Van Buren had acquired, the world was his "oyster." He was full of affectionate gratitude to his mother, who had struggled so hard for the family that he might be free to struggle only for himself; full of love for his sweetheart, and full of ambition and energy to raise himself to riches and distinction.

Martin resolved to enter politics when he settled in Kinderhook, as he knew that prestige and clients came through acting on the hustings and in party caucuses. According to Mr. Mackenzie, he entered the firm of Van Buren and Miller. In those days a

lawyer had to practise in the inferior courts for four years or more before being permitted to undertake the weightier problems of his profession. Almost immediately after Van Buren had reached the end of such service, he was sworn in as counselor of the Supreme Court.

At last, he and the shy Hannah Hoes could be married. The ceremony was celebrated on a Saturday morning in February, 1807. To avoid the boisterous celebration which would have followed a wedding in Kinderhook, they drove twenty-five miles over the snow-covered road and the frozen Hudson, to be made man and wife in the village of Catskill. Van Buren was twenty-five, his bride a year younger. For twelve years of married life, the love of this gentle woman was the blessing of Martin Van Buren's busy days. It was the lodestar that drew him back to the domestic hearth from days and nights on the hustings, and from long speaking tours to the various taverns.

Shortly after he was married, he moved to Hudson City to live. After eight years, his growing professional standing and political leadership drew him to Albany. From this time forth, it is said, the highest wishes of his early life began to be realized. Wealth, fame, and influence were the fruits of his unremitting industry. His natural talents reached their full expansion, and his labors exhibited results. "Amid a constellation of great minds, whose brilliant efforts erected and adorned the fabric of New York jurisprudence, the vigor of his intellect . . . won for him a conspicuous and acknowledged eminence."

This adulation, however, fell upon unheeding ears,

as after the birth of his fourth son, who died in infancy, sickness invaded his home, and hastened the cherished wife and mother away from her loved ones. The delicate woman, whom Van Buren had always loved, developed a cough that stayed with her, and made all of her household anxious. In February of 1818 Van Buren threw politics to the winds, and rushed to Kinderhook on account of the illness of his mother, who soon after died. He did not take his wife with him, though she had wanted to go. He never permitted her to take the slightest chance of catching cold; her cough was too serious a trouble to him. Yet it was only one short year before he had to make another trip to Kinderhook, and this time she was with him. There was no further need of protecting her from the cold. The sad ride brought back to Van Buren that other February day twelve years before, when he and Jannetzi—as he always called her in their own tongue—had driven over the snow and ice to be married in Catskill.

He had carved on her headstone: “Sacred to the memory of Mrs. Hannah Van Buren, who departed this life on the 5th of February, A. D. 1819, in the 38th year of her age. She was a sincere Christian, dutiful child, tender mother, and most affectionate wife; precious shall be her memory.”

And her memory was precious to Van Buren all the days of his life. Her death was the one great tragedy that came to him. He was devoted to her from his earliest recollection, and no other woman ever entered his affection. He was embittered for a long time over her passing, and even his passion for politics could not lure him away from Kinderhook

for weeks, though the session at Albany was in full swing at the time.

Kinderhook had become for him not only his native village, but a hallowed spot where slept his beloved dead. Along its paths and lanes were enshrined young love's dreams, parental devotion, and the fruition of ambitions realized. He wanted to linger with his memories; but he had just reached the zenith of his endeavors, and the game he had begun as a yellow-haired boy in his father's tavern must be played to the end, if he would achieve its highest award.

## CHAPTER IX

### WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON

(1841)

THE ninth President of the United States was elected as a log-cabin candidate, though he was born to one of the first families of Virginia, in a manor overlooking the turbid waters of the James River.

Exactly a century before his birth, on February 9, 1773, the plantation, which was then called "Berkeley Hundred," had become the property of a Harrison; and it was owned and occupied by that family through five generations. The first Harrison became master of Berkeley in 1673. His name was Benjamin, and he was Speaker of the House of Burgesses and treasurer of the Virginia Colony. The estate descended to his son, also Benjamin, who built the beautiful two-story brick house with gable roof and dormer windows that still stands. He, in turn, left it to his son, Benjamin, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and father of the ninth President, William Henry Harrison.

Benjamin Harrison, the father of William, was among the first to make the cause of the people his own in the contest with Great Britain. He devoted so much of his time and fortune to this cause that he realized, at the close of the Revolution, that he would be unable to leave his sons independent by their own resources. He therefore determined to leave them

a richer inheritance than that of mere land and gold, namely, "sound morals, correct principles, and a good education." William Henry was committed to the guardianship of Robert Morrison, and was placed, at an early age, under the best teachers in the colony. When his progress gave evidence of talent that pointed to future distinction, he was placed in Hampden-Sidney College. A year later he entered an academy of higher standing in Southhampton County. There he studied with great industry and success until he was seventeen, when he was considered qualified to begin the study of medicine, the profession his father desired him to follow.

Accordingly, he was placed in the office of Dr. Leiber, of Richmond. One year later he was sent to Philadelphia to complete his studies under the eminent Dr. Rush, a Revolutionary compatriot of his father and, like him, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. It was while the youth was making this journey to Philadelphia that he heard of the sudden death of his father; and never having had any personal desire to become a physician, he at once abandoned all idea of finishing the study of medicine.

His childhood dream of becoming a soldier could now be realized; and it appeared that his father's death had come at an opportune time. News of the disaster that had overtaken Harmar and the Northwestern army, in their contest with the Indians in that section, was just then arousing the country. William Henry determined to adopt the profession of arms and join the broken Army of the West. Mr. Morrison, his guardian, used every argument to in-



duce him to continue in the study of medicine, as he recognized in William Henry that kindness of nature, nobility of character, and suavity of manners that peculiarly qualified his ward for success in the medical world. But the desire to distinguish himself in the defense of his country against the Indians had been predominant in the youth's nature for too long. He began at once to join his fortunes with those of his unfortunate countrymen.

Possessing all the elements of true courage in the highest degree, young Harrison became one of the greatest Indian fighters of his time. He ranked equal to Andrew Jackson in leading an army single file, the Indian method of warfare, and he soon rose to the rank of lieutenant, serving under "Mad Anthony" Wayne. His zeal, courage, and ability inspired General Wayne with such confidence in his character as an officer of prudence and judgment that he entrusted him with the important and responsible command of Fort Washington. This was just after he had been promoted to the rank of captain. William Henry was at this time twenty-two years old.

Shortly after he took command of Fort Washington, business called Harrison to North Bend, where he became a guest of Judge Symmes. This was the John Cleves Symmes of New Jersey, who was delegate to the Continental Congress at Philadelphia in 1784 and 1785. Following that, he had been appointed Judge of the Northwestern Territory, and had moved to Ohio. After his emigration, the tract of land along the Ohio River, extending twenty miles above Cincinnati to Big Miami, and about the same

distance below that city, became known as the "Symmes' Purchase." It is said that Judge Symmes established his residence at North Bend and laid out a city, intending to make it the great commercial center of the West. But when Fort Washington was established at Cincinnati, giving the people the military protection which they so anxiously sought, Symmes' city sank into comparative insignificance.

Judge Symmes had been married twice. His first wife was Miss Anna Tuthill, of Southhold, Long Island. Of this marriage there were two daughters, Marie and Anna. The elder was already married to Peyton Short and lived in Kentucky. The younger was a charming, pretty, black-eyed girl of twenty when William Henry Harrison became a guest in her father's home at North Bend.

Young Harrison was tall, slender, and of graceful military carriage; and he possessed the manners of his cavalier ancestry. Large dark eyes and an intellectual face completed the attributes of his personal appearance. With an established reputation as a gallant soldier, what more was needed to create a romantic figure? He was just the person to attract the lovely Anna Symmes, who, at the early age of four, had experienced the thrilling adventure of being smuggled through the enemy's lines by her father, who was dressed in a British uniform.

That was the sort of adventure that no girl could ever quite forget, and young as she was at the time, it stamped itself on Anna Symmes' life indelibly, and caused her forever afterward to idealize all brave soldiers. She had been born near Morristown,

New Jersey, and soon after her birth her mother had died. Four years later, when the State became the battle ground of the British and the Continental armies, her father, who was a Colonel in the Continental Army, desired to place his motherless girl in the home of her grandparents on Long Island. Since the British were in possession of New York, an American officer caught there would suffer the penalty of death. The anxiety for the safety of his child was so great that Colonel Symmes conceived the bold plan of passing through the enemy's lines, disguised in one of their own uniforms. It was a perilous undertaking, but with Anna wrapped in a blanket and held against his breast with one arm, he rode his horse over the frozen ground to the safety of her grandparents' home at Southhold.

Anna's years had doubled, and American independence had been recognized by England, before she saw her father again. He returned to his own troops in the Continental Army and served with distinction throughout the war. Then he made arrangements for her to have the best educational instruction New York City afforded, and left her to the care of her grandparents until she grew to womanhood.

Mrs. Tuthill, her grandmother, was a godly woman, whose soul had been deeply stirred by the preaching of Whitefield. From her, Anna received her religious instruction, and acquired habits of order, truthfulness, industry, prudence, and economy which characterized her conduct through all the years of her life. She was first sent to a seminary at East Hampton, then to the school of Mrs. Isabelle Graham in New York City. She was there in the



ANNA SYMMES HARRISON  
(*Mrs. William Henry Harrison*)



early days of the French Revolution and saw fugitives from the French court—nobles, statesmen, and generals—loitering about the streets, their rich dress giving the practical American city the romantic atmosphere of the Old World. At nineteen, she bade adieu to all her girlhood friends and to her aged grandparents, to accompany to Ohio her father and his bride, the daughter of Governor Livingston of New York.

Her grandmother's training had made of Anna a sedate, quiet child, who was growing into a demure young woman. Yet, one year after she had reached Ohio and had met the young captain who was the son of a Virginia grandee, she showed no hesitation in admitting the attraction he held for her. Their engagement was announced a few months after their first meeting, and it is said that Judge Symmes gave a ready consent to the marriage. It is added, however, that shortly before the day appointed for the wedding the Judge heard some slanderous report of the young captain, and withdrew his consent. "The lovers, in nowise daunted," claims Mr. Lew Wallace, writing of this affair, "did not even end their engagement for one day by the usual method of procedure under such circumstances—a lovers' quarrel. When the time set for the wedding arrived, they were married by Dr. Stephen Wood, a justice of the peace, in the presence of Anna's stepmother and the many guests who had been bidden to the ceremony. Judge Symmes, either thinking the affair off or declining to be present, rode to Cincinnati and left the coast clear."

Considering the importance of the bride's father,

a high dignitary of the United States Government, and the aristocratic lineage from which the groom had come, one might fancy that the wedding would be one of exceeding splendor. Yet such was not the case. To picture it accurately, the time and the condition of the people of that region must be considered. The West was still a dense wilderness. There were no luxuries even for the wealthiest of its inhabitants. To be moderately comfortable was to be rich; store goods were scarce, and prices out of reach; there was no mode of travel except horseback, and often it required a week to go to and from a mill. The company that assembled to witness the marriage of William Henry Harrison and Anna Symmes had to travel by narrow paths cut through thickets of blackberry bushes, much higher than the tallest of men, and through other undergrowth of every variety. Each man had to carry a rifle, a powderhorn, and a pouch; all had to move cautiously, ready for instant combat, as every step taken was liable to be into an ambush of Indians. Wives rode behind their husbands on the same horse, the men wearing buckskin coats and breeches and coonskin caps, while the women were gay in a plaid linsey-woolsey of their own weaving, cutting, and sewing. There were coarse shoes on the women at this wedding, instead of slippers, and the men wore heavy boots in place of dancing pumps. The "wedding cake" is said to have taken the form of New England doughnuts; and on the sideboard were jugs of hard cider and whiskey, none the worse for their home brewing. The dancing, with which every fête was rounded off, was performed to music played by a colored fiddler, who

knew the plantation jigs, the "pigeon-wing," and the "balance all" as a mocking-bird knows his whistle.

The young husband took his wife to Cincinnati without delay. Some time afterward Judge Symmes met his son-in-law at a dinner given by General Wilkinson to General Wayne.

"Well, sir," said the Judge in a bad humor, "I understand you have married Anna."

"Yes, sir," replied young Harrison.

"How do you expect to support her?"

"By my sword and my own right arm," was the answer, which is said to have so pleased Judge Symmes that he became at once reconciled to the marriage, and happy visits to North Bend began to be a frequent occurrence.

Young Captain Harrison built a house for his fair partner near the site of Fort Washington, and there the lovely Anna Symmes spent the early years of her married life. Three children were born to her in this home. The third child, John Scott Harrison, was destined to become the father of a President.

Two years after his marriage, Captain Harrison resigned his command and was appointed Lieutenant Governor of the Northwest Territory. When the territory was entitled to a delegate to Congress, he was chosen for the position, and Mrs. Harrison accompanied him to Washington. She called it her bridal trip, and she spent most of her time visiting her husband's people in Virginia.

The seat in Congress was retained only for a single session, but he succeeded in that brief period in securing several important advantages for his con-



stituents. During this session the Northwest Territory, represented by Harrison, was divided, and the new Territory of Indiana was established; and not long after the passage of the Act, President John Adams appointed Harrison its first Governor and superintendent of Indian affairs. He was reappointed twice by Jefferson and once by President Madison.

North Bend now became Mrs. Harrison's permanent residence. It was the old homestead there that was in later years visited by armies of pilgrims. This house is said to have been built by General Harrison about 1814, and the greater part of Mrs. Harrison's life was spent there. No doubt her husband would have been happier could he have had his headquarters at North Bend, surrounded by his beloved wife and family, but Vincennes was the seat of the government, and there were other places on the shores of the lakes which he had to frequent. Often he occupied a tent pitched in the woods convenient to the constant coming and going of subordinate officials. It is said that always subjects pertinent to the affairs of government demanded his best thought,—the founding of settlements, plans of campaign, and the settlement of disputes brought to him on final appeal. "To him fell the duty of the original subdivision of Indiana into townships and counties, and the protection of the adventurous settlers from the ever watchful and merciless Indians."

Mrs. Harrison was the mother of ten children, and she was, for most of the time, in sole charge of this large growing family. Schools in that new and unsettled West were few and far between, and the high-

est evidence of her efficiency as a helpmate is to be found in the fact that not only her children but the children of her surrounding neighbors as well were given the advantages of education. She employed a tutor, and many outside children became intimates of her household to avail themselves of the privilege of school. If William Henry Harrison was, as he has been called, the "Father of the West," Mrs. Harrison was certainly to a large extent its "Mother." Laura Carter Holloway, in writing of her, states that "many, very many of her acts of neighborly kindness and Christian charity will never be known on earth, as she shrank from any exposition of her benevolence." Also it is said of her that she was never known to weary or to complain of her manifold duties or of the added cares she assumed for the benefit of others.

The strong tenderness and high regard of William Henry Harrison for his wife is attested by the fact that even after fifty years of marriage her feelings were his first consideration. One reads that in 1840, during the Presidential campaign, a delegation of politicians visited North Bend on a Sunday to confer with the General. He met them, so the story goes, before they could reach the house, and extending his hand, said: "Gentlemen, I should be most happy to welcome you on any other day, but if I had no regard for religion myself, I have too much respect for the religion of my wife to encourage the violation of the Christian Sabbath."

Sunday was always a day when secular matters were set aside in Mrs. Harrison's home. Church was attended by all of the family, after which a bountiful

hospitality was tendered to the congregation by the General and Mrs. Harrison. The table, upon these occasions, was always plentifully laden, seldom with plates for fewer than fifty people. And everything served was produced on the Harrison farm. This custom was kept up after the General's death, as long as Mrs. Harrison remained in the old home, and the aging widow would be most uncomfortable if there were not as many as three kinds of meat for the company.

Mrs. Harrison was annoyed by the General's nomination for President. She would not consider even the remote possibility of his election. The idea of breaking up the retirement of her home and being separated from her children and grandchildren, to fill a station of fashion and position in Washington, filled her heart with dismay. But never has more interest been shown in an election. Throughout the land were heard the popular campaign songs, "Tippecanoe and Tyler, too" and "Van is a Used-up Man." Log cabins, illustrative of General Harrison's early days in the West, were erected everywhere. The election resulted in an overwhelming victory.

Yet the victory brought no elation to Mrs. Harrison, other than a profound gratitude for the appreciation the country had shown for the service of her husband. Her health had become delicate after the strenuous years during which she had raised her large family, and in February, 1841, when her husband left for Washington to be inaugurated, she was particularly frail. Her physician protested strongly against her attempting to cross the mountains until

later in the spring; and this delay made the journey unnecessary for her forever.

General Harrison died one month from the day he was inaugurated President of the United States. The cause was pneumonia, the germ of which must have been taken into his system on the day he had entered the national capital. Besides the extreme cold of the day, the air was filled with rain and sleet, and he had walked from the station with bare head and without an overcoat. It is doubtful if his wardrobe contained an overcoat, for he was never known to wear one; and the piercing northwest wind that blew on the following morning also found him without that protection. Mounted on a spirited white charger, he was again hatless as he rode to the Capitol for the oath of office. Benumbed and half frozen after delivering his inaugural address, he refused the carriage offered him and rode to the Executive Mansion as he had come. Following this imprudence came the duties of office, made more than burdensome by office-seekers; and a short time later he was caught in a shower on his early walk to market. He refused to change his wet clothes when he returned, and the disease he had been inviting settled upon him.

Mrs. Harrison was busy with preparations for leaving home when the news of her husband's death reached her. She had but recently received his letter telling her of the brilliant inaugural procession, the ball, and the high honors that had been heaped upon him. No wonder she was stricken to earth by the tidings. She who had so often carried on alone, amid the many dangers of the unsettled West, and

many times when her children were prostrated by long, severe illness, could not realize that her husband was dead. She sank into a sort of stupor, a blackness of despair, from which she did not recover for many months.

Time, the great healer, finally helped her back to a cheerful resignation, and she spent fourteen more useful years with a chastened heart, helping and comforting all about her. As old age crept on, she was persuaded to remove from the old homestead to the residence of her only remaining son, Hon. J. Scott Harrison, who lived five miles below North Bend on the Ohio River. There she was the object of an almost idolatrous devotion from all her grandchildren, through the remaining years of her life.

## CHAPTER X

### JOHN TYLER

(1841-1845)

JOHN TYLER was the first man to become President of the United States through the death of another. Mr. James Morgan says that greatness and the Presidency found him on his knee, playing "knucks" with his sons in the yard of his home in the "stately old vice-regal village" of Williamsburg, Virginia. "He had not even heard that Harrison was ill," continues Mr. Morgan, "until destiny, without steam, wire, or rail to carry it, sped to him from Washington by boat and buggy with the news that the President had been dead a day and the empty Presidential chair was waiting for the Vice-President."

One cannot entirely agree with Mr. Morgan, as it appears from various accounts that quite a large share of greatness, or at least of prominence, had already been attained by John Tyler, beginning with his graduation from the College of William and Mary at the early age of seventeen. There he delivered a graduation essay on "Education," the subject suggested by his father, which was unanimously pronounced by the entire faculty of the college as the best commencement oration, both in style and in matter, that had been delivered at that institution within their recollection.

Returning home from William and Mary, John

began his study of law under his father, Judge Tyler. He also received valuable suggestions from his cousin, Chancellor Samuel Tyler, who lived at West Berry, not far from his father's home in Charles City County. When Judge Tyler was called from the bench to become Governor of Virginia, John's law study was transferred to the direction of Edmund Randolph of Richmond. From the *Letters and Times of the Tylers* by Lyon G. Tyler, it is learned that not long after John attained his nineteenth year he appeared at the bar of his native county as a practising attorney, a certificate having been granted to him without inquiry as to his age. "Such was his success," says a Mr. Abell, who is quoted in these letters, "that ere three months had elapsed there was scarcely a disputable case on the docket of the court in which he was not retained upon the one side or the other." He is said to have united great richness of fancy and mastery of language with singular acuteness in detecting the weak points of his adversary's argument, and to have possessed a most lawyerlike faculty of magnifying, without appearing to do so, the strong points of his own cause. There are few cases on record in which his client was not successful. His extensive reading, aided by his great fertility of imagination, enabled him to clothe his descriptions with a vivid coloring, and thus to possess a marked power over the feelings of an audience. "Having, too, a keen sense of the ridiculous and a happy faculty of applying it whenever it suited his purposes, when his suit was not to be won upon its merits, or superior ability in its arguments, he would resort to those weapons to carry

on the combat, and seldom, very seldom, without success."

An anecdote in the letters illustrates Mr. Tyler's powers of oratory with great effectiveness, "especially in the particular of action, which Cicero tells us is the essential qualification of the great orator." Young Tyler had a desperate case at the bar, and the law appeared all on the side of his opponent, "who was no less a person than Andrew Stevenson." On the morning of the trial Mr. Stevenson appeared in court with a pile of English law books under his arm. Tyler appeared with nothing. When the time came for argument, Stevenson made an eloquent and brilliant speech, citing copiously from his authorities. Mr. Tyler's client appeared sad and disconsolate when he looked at his champion, sitting apparently without a weapon of defense. No sooner had Stevenson taken his seat than Tyler was on his feet. He began in what is said to have been his usual manner, full of compliments to Mr. Stevenson and full of regret at his own deficiencies. He warmed more and more to his subject and lifted himself to higher and higher oratorical levels, without once touching the law. Knowing that he would have to say something in reply to Mr. Stevenson's references, he is said to have met the necessity by suddenly exclaiming with a singular intermixture of tones, expressive of surprise, confidence, and contempt:

"The gentleman has referred to authority—English authority! He has brought into this court the rules and laws of a rigid aristocracy, at war with every American principle. And pray, what has a Charles City jury to do with English authority?"



Charles City—the birthplace of Bacon's Rebellion, the home of revolution, and the land of republican principles? Sir, this jury intends to decide this case on the broad principles of common sense and natural right. They will have none of your English authority! Away with it!" Suiting the action to the word, so it is recorded, Mr. Tyler spurned from him with his right hand the books of Mr. Stevenson, until they fell over the bar at the feet of an electrified jury. "The act and Mr. Tyler's manner were so irresistible that the jury disregarded the law books, and in five minutes returned a verdict for Mr. Tyler's client."

Such an extraordinary scene in a staid court of law could have been carried through to success only by an extraordinary man. It may be worth while to pause here, to see if there cannot be traced in his ancestry the qualities that combined to produce him. John Tyler, the "accidental President," and hero of the remarkable law case, was born at Greenway, in Charles City County, on March 29, 1790. He was the second son of Judge John Tyler, who was the fourth in line from the first of his name to establish himself in America. John Tyler, with his brother, Henry, came from England to Middle Plantation—the present city of Williamsburg—in 1636. These brothers were younger members of the ancient Shropshire family, originally from Wales. They are said to be the descendants of the famous Wat Tyler, a mighty blacksmith who, with Jack Straw, placed himself at the head of an exasperated multitude from Kent and Essex, marched upon London, and resisted tyranny in the time of Richard

the Second. However that may be, we have record that John Tyler of Virginia, father of President Tyler, attained high honors. He was a man of fiery spirit, distinguished as a Revolutionary patriot and an eminent jurist. As Judge of the Admiralty, he decided the first prize case which occurred after independence was declared, "holding his court," Mr. Wise says, "under a large golden willow that stood in the yard of Greenway." He was a warm and lifelong friend of Thomas Jefferson, and became Speaker of the House of Burgesses and Judge of the State District Court. From 1808 to 1811 he was Governor of Virginia, and finally Judge of the United States Court until he died.

He was a lover of poetry, and wrote sonnets to the pretty maidens of the county. He is described as a noble specimen of the booted and spurred cavalier of colonial times,—“a ruffled gentleman of great learning and mental force, and a man of unspotted name for truth, integrity, and pluck.” He was known, respected, and loved throughout the State. His marriage to Mary Armstead united the homes of Greenway and Buck Rowe, and gave to John Tyler, President, as illustrious a maternal line as was that of his father.

The Armstead family came from England in the seventeenth century. The daughters of this family have been equally remarkable for their strength of character and their beauty of person. Mr. Henry A. Wise says that the names of the male descendants of this family have been marked prominently on the tablets of their country's history. The "Star-Spangled Banner" is blended with the name of Colonel

George Armstead, brother of Mrs. Tyler, who was defending Fort McHenry in the war of 1812, while Francis Scott Key was penning the words, " Our flag is still there! "

Nor was John Tyler, the President, devoid of the fire of his father's spirit, or of his keen intelligence. This is plainly seen from the beginning of his public career, in spite of his soft, bland mildness. Like his father, he loved poetry and wrote many sonnets to the girls. At the age of eighteen, while he was studying law under Edmund Randolph in Richmond, he went home to Greenway on a visit, and at a neighborhood party met Miss Letitia Christian. She was just the sort of dainty, shy little beauty to attract the silken-haired, slender lad with twinkling blue eyes and mercurial temperament.

Miss Christian was the third daughter of Robert Christian of Cedar Grove, in New Kent, the county adjoining Charles City. Her mother was Mary Brown, of the same family as Judge John Brown of Williamsburg and Professor Dabney Brown of William and Mary College. Letitia was considered the fairest of her six sisters, and was the pet and idol of the entire family. Her two brothers were distinguished for their personal courage, their intelligence, and their grace of manners and appearance.

John Tyler loved Letitia almost from the first. But she was such a shrinking, modest little person that his ardent wooing had to be restrained. Then, too, it is said that he had many rivals, as her hand was sought in marriage by a number of suitors, some of whom were possessors of large estates. That, however, seems to have given Mr. Tyler his greatest

satisfaction and pride in winning her, as he declared that the thought of her being influenced by prudential motives would have tortured him.

Even after their troth was plighted, he was twice elected to the State Legislature before their marriage was solemnized; but so dignified and reserved was this young beauty that she would not give her permission for her lover to address her by letter. Yet, three months before the marriage, he dared to break bounds and send her his first love letter, "remarkable," as we are told, "for its lofty delicacy." It is still carefully preserved in the family, as was a book of original sonnets, later lost during the Civil War, which were written to "his Letitia" in his youthful days. Their engagement lasted for five years, and he often told his children that "he never presumed to kiss their mother's hand at parting until within three weeks of the wedding day."

Mr. and Mrs. Tyler were born in the same year, he in March, she in November of 1790. They were married on Mr. Tyler's twenty-third birthday. This letter, written to Dr. Henry Curtis by Mr. Tyler, is typical of the many written by him at this time.

*"Greenway, March 23, 1813.*

"DEAR HENRY:

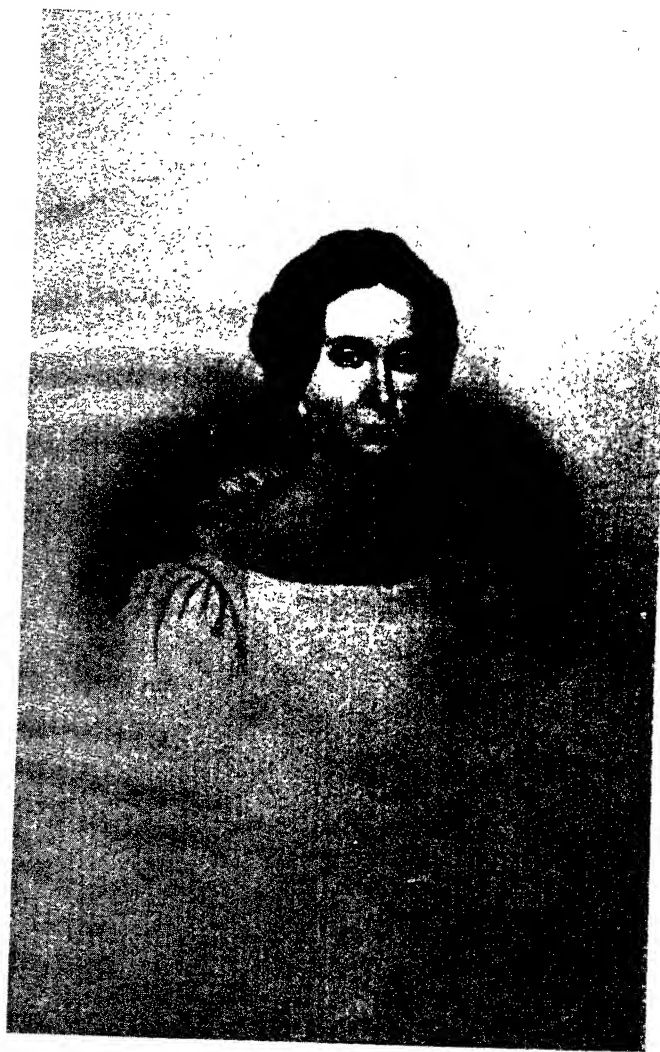
"On the 29th instant, I lead my Letitia to the altar, and if you can be present at the ceremony, I shall derive additional satisfaction. . . . All would be pleased to see you at Mr. C.'s. I had really calculated on experiencing a tremor on the near approach of the day, but I believe that I am so much of an old man already as to feel less dismay at a change of situation than the greater part of those of

my age. I have reflected deeply upon the consequences, and whether prosperity smiles or adversity frowns, I believe that I shall still keep from sinking. To sink with prosperity, may appear at first view an awkward expression, but many more are ruined by its smiles and blandishments than from any other cause. I have nothing more to say than the British have been as high as Sandy Point, and that time has lost for a week much of his wonted alacrity, and still goes creeping on upon crutches. What think you; will he go full gallop a twelve-month hence?

“Yours, &c.,  
“JOHN TYLER.”

The marriage was celebrated at Cedar Grove with the usual merrymaking among the large family of relatives and friends. After the festivities, Mr. and Mrs. Tyler went to live at Mons-Sacer, a part of the Greenway estate that was bequeathed to Tyler by his late father. Here, and later, in more pretentious homes, Letitia Christian Tyler proved herself a great deal more than merely a beautiful, shy, reserved woman. She is shown through all the years of her life to be a person of most excellent mind, capable, eminently practical in all her views, well trained in the domestic arts, and a pious, devoted member of the Episcopal Church.

So one sees the lovely, retiring little Letitia called upon to prove her womanhood as a twenty-two-year-old bride. That she rose to the occasion and proudly showed herself mistress of the situation is attested in her children's writings. From a letter written by her son to Laura Carter Holloway, one is given an interesting glimpse of the many sides of her domestic



LETITIA CHRISTIAN TYLER  
(*Mrs. John Tyler*)



life: "It not only fell to her province to superintend the domestic economy at home, and to train and educate her children, but to bestow no little attention upon the affairs of the plantation, and to take care of and provide for the negro families both in sickness and health. As gentle and delicate in person and in health as she always was, she never shrank for a moment from these complicated, exacting, and often harassing duties and responsibilities. . . . Without hesitation she repressed every inclination, if indeed she ever entertained any, to play the rôle of the 'fine lady' as the English and Americans have it, or that of 'une grande dame,' as the French have it, however fitted she may have been by birth, by education, by association, by the elements of her character, and by the grace and beauty of her person. It was doubtless in view of these onerous duties devolving upon my mother, and the immense self-abnegation they required, that caused my father so earnestly to desire retirement from public life, and so often to resign high political station." He goes on at some length, saying that the fates allotted to each of his parents an appropriate sphere, "the one the 'helpmeet' of the other." The especial portrait of his mother that he wished to bring out and cause to be appreciated was that of her manner and bearing on the occasion of his father's visits home during the sessions of Congress, or upon his return at its close.

"I can see my mother now, as she would be seated sewing or knitting, when my father's voice would be heard either approaching the house or entering it. Instantly a blush would mantle her cheek, a beam



of joy would irradiate her countenance, the work fall from her fingers, and she would bound forward to meet him. . . . Such quick, impelling affection, such untutored manifestation of joy might be regarded by an ardent and devoted husband of nice perceptions and refined taste as not altogether consistent with a proper self-respect, as somewhat deficient in delicacy, as in a measure unbecoming the modest and chaste matron—the wife of a grave, noble, and lofty Senator. There should be more reserve, there should be a waiting to be sought by him. . . . She would repress her transport, quietly resume her seat—radiant with beauty—and await his approach.”

Mr. Tyler was elected to the legislature five times, twice before his marriage and three times after. During 1815, while a member of the House of Delegates, he was elected, by a large vote of the two houses, one of the Executive Council of Virginia. In November, 1816, when the death of the Hon. John Clopton made a vacancy in the representation in Congress from Richmond, Mr. Tyler was elected to Congress over Mr. Andrew Stevenson, who was then Speaker of the House of Delegates and afterward Minister to England. A victory in such a contest showed Mr. Tyler's growing prominence.

None of the household tasks, or the caring and rearing of seven children, two having died in infancy, or the overseeing of a plantation,—tasks regarded to-day as drudgery—ever coarsened Letitia Tyler. When her husband, through his oratory, became Governor of the State, she took her place in the mansion at Richmond with all the decorum that

could be desired in a dignified Virginia matron. A daughter-in-law had this to say of her, soon after being taken to her home as a bride: " Mr. Tyler's mother is very much as I imagined her from his description. She must have been beautiful in her youth, for she is still lovely in her declining years and wretched health. Her skin is as smooth and soft as a baby's; she has sweet, loving black eyes, and her features are delicately moulded; besides this, her feet and hands are perfect; and she is gentle and graceful in her movements, with a most peculiar air of native refinement about everything she says and does."

Mrs. Tyler suffered a stroke of paralysis in 1839, from which she never fully recovered; and it was in this feeble state of health that she accompanied her husband to the White House at Washington two years later, when the untimely death of President Harrison placed him at the head of the nation. To Mrs. Robert Tyler, the daughter-in-law who penned the above description of her, were delegated the social duties of " Lady of the White House " until the President's own daughter, Mrs. Semple, could take her place. But Mrs. Tyler had her own private apartments in the President's Mansion, and she continued her mode of living for the few short months that were allotted to her, in much the same manner to which she had been accustomed. She passed her time chiefly in the society of her devoted family and of the relatives who made frequent visits to see her. Receiving but few Washington visitors, she returned no calls; and on but one occasion was she ever downstairs at a brilliant assemblage at the White House.

That was the occasion of the marriage of her third daughter, Elizabeth, to Mr. William Waller.

Early in the next autumn she was again stricken with paralysis, and lingered but a few days. The grief of her husband and family was unbounded. After her body had lain in state in the east room of the White House for several days, it was taken to the old paternal plantation in New Kent County for burial.

During the second winter after Mrs. Tyler's death, the widower President, worn down by loneliness and the unhappy state of political affairs, found solace and relaxation in the society of the cultivated and accomplished Miss Julia Gardiner. She was the daughter of a wealthy gentleman who resided at Gardiner's Island, on Long Island Sound. The eldest of three children, her education had been completed at the Chegary Institute, in New York City, after which she had accompanied her father on an extensive European trip. On her return from abroad, she visited Washington during the sitting of Congress and met the President. She and her father were among the guests invited by Captain Stockton to accompany the President and his Cabinet on a sail upon the Potomac, in the war steamer *Princeton*, to witness the testing of the "Peacemaker," a new cannon. Every one knows the shocking catastrophe with which that sail ended. Something went wrong, and the ball burst the cannon, the explosion killing two members of the Cabinet and Miss Gardiner's father. Their bodies were taken to the Executive Mansion, where funeral services were performed. Miss Gardiner returned to New York with the body

of her father. The gloom cast over the capital by the accident blotted out all remembrance of the attraction Miss Gardiner had appeared to hold for the widower President.

The following summer, however, President Tyler announced that urgent business required his presence in New York. There, at the Church of the Ascension, on June 26, 1844, he made Julia Gardiner his wife. They returned to the White House, and the second Mrs. Tyler received guests and dispensed hospitality with queenly grace, until the end of her husband's administration eight months later.

The expiration of the term of this President is claimed by some historians to have been a relief to the nation, and probably to himself. Others condone his administration by saying that he was in a false position,—that he was a Democrat elected by the Whigs, which made it impossible for him to please. Yet, through every storm of vituperation that swept over John Tyler, he was sustained by the tender memory of his gentle Letitia, and by the loving devotion of his beautiful young second wife.

## CHAPTER XI

### JAMES KNOX POLK

(1845-1849)

WHEN Samuel Polk took his family across the Allegheny Mountains, over the trail made by the dauntless heroes of 1780, his eldest son, James, a sickly child, was eleven years old.

Sickly or not, the boy had the blood of strong men in his veins. Born in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, on November 2, 1795, he was of Scotch-Irish descent on both sides, his mother's name being Jane Knox Polk. Moreover, his grandfather, Ezekiel Polk, and his great-uncle, Colonel Thomas Polk, were signers of the famous Mecklenburg Declaration of May 20, 1775—a series of resolutions asserting that the residents of the country should thereafter be independent of British rule—and were generally recognized as the leading spirits in that daring movement.

Samuel Polk, his father, was a plain farmer, who, at an early age, had been thrown upon his own resources and had become familiar with the hardships of frontier conditions. Being of an enterprising nature, it was with the hope of improving his fortune that he followed the tide of emigration toward the West. He settled in the fertile Duck River Valley of Tennessee. There was enacted, in the next few years, a transformation of a tract of

wilderness into a civilized community, a task the "pathfinders of American history" were so often repeating in those days.

Could the eleven-year-old boy, James Knox Polk, have taken part in the active, out-of-door, pioneer life, the weak condition of his childhood might have been overcome. His ancestors were no weaklings—his pedigree has been traced back to the sturdy Fulbert, who was born in the reign of Malcolm III of Scotland. But with James, the sturdiness of his ancestors seemed to manifest itself only in his will. Never having been strong, such work as clearing land and making a farm was not for him; nor was his constitution such that it could endure the exposure of surveying, the occupation his father added to farming. He showed himself, instead, to be of studious habits, and his father encouraged him to take advantage of what educational facilities the new community afforded.

His health, however, did not improve under the strain of the close application he bestowed on his studies. Accordingly, his father selected for him a life that would be more active than study, but less laborious than farming and surveying. He was placed with a merchant, to learn the mercantile business. This change nearly broke the boy's heart, and he pleaded so earnestly and so persistently with his father for permission to go back to school that this was finally granted. In July of his seventeenth year he was sent to a small academy near the county seat of Maury.

From this academy, a year later, young Polk went to Murfreesborough, the county seat of Rutherford.

This was within two miles of the farm on which was born Sarah Childress, the dark-skinned, black-eyed girl who was destined to become the beloved mistress of the White House.

Sarah, however, did not attend the academy at Murfreesborough. It was a boys' school, and education for girls was still a bit ridiculed. Notwithstanding that fact, her father, possessed of uncommon sagacity, wanted education for his daughters. Consequently, after Sarah and her sister Susan had, for a short time, attended the common school with their brothers, Mr. Childress engaged Samuel P. Black, the principal of the Murfreesborough Academy, to instruct the girls in the afternoons, when the exercises of the academy were over.

It is not very likely that Sarah became acquainted at this time with the tall, slim, pale-faced youth, who was so industrious and devoted to his studies, and so painstaking about performing every duty making for exemplary scholarship that he was unpopular with his fellow students. If James Polk ever passed the merry little girl when she went in the afternoon to Mr. Black for instruction, he was probably too absorbed in the school subject of the moment to have observed her. His entire time was given to hard and well directed study.

After two years at Murfreesborough, he went to the university of his native State at Chapel Hill, North Carolina. From there he was graduated three years later. He then began to study law in the office of Felix Grundy, a prominent Democratic-Republican and a leader of the Tennessee bar.

Sarah Childress, too, followed her studies away

from Murfreesborough. When she was thirteen, she and her sister were sent to Nashville, to attend the private school of Mr. Abercrombie, a noted teacher of that day, who conducted one of the first schools for girls. They also took piano lessons from his daughter, which was a rare event for a girl of that early time. General Jackson, living in Nashville, was then at the zenith of his military power, and Nashville rejoiced in the luster reflected upon her by this distinguished citizen. Sarah and her sister boarded with the family of Colonel Butler, one of General Jackson's staff officers, and they saw the General frequently. The greatest thrill of the little girls' lives, up to this time, was over a brilliant ball given in the General's home.

At fifteen, Sarah and her sister were sent to the Moravian Female Seminary at Salem, North Carolina. This little town is said to have been founded about the middle of the eighteenth century by the Society of United Brethren, under the direction of Count Zinzendorf, from whom it received its name, the meaning of which is "peace." Anson and Fannie Nelson relate that the young girls traveled the hundreds of miles between Murfreesborough and Salem on horseback, escorted by their brother and a trusty manservant who carried their portmanteaus on his horse. Such a trip, in this day of swift and easy travel, would be one prolonged adventure.

In Salem, a new and different life awaited Sarah and Susan Childress, "the hush and methods of a large school," where lessons were learned in the company of a small world of students. New friendships were formed, and pleasant walks and talks,



combined with daily services for prayer and divine guidance, all went toward the moulding of the growing girls' characters.

While at this school in Salem, Sarah Childress did a piece of needlework which she kept all her life. It was a picture of a tomb, gleaming white through the green foliage of surrounding trees, worked in chenille on white satin. It is said that when she became the widow of Ex-President Polk, she often called attention to the resemblance that this picture bore to the tomb in the garden, which was in full view of her chamber window, and which, for nearly forty years, was a reminder of her greatest joy and sorrow.

The tranquil days of study and of girlish dreams in the Moravian school came suddenly to an end for the Childress girls. They were called home by the death of their father; and though Mr. Childress is said to have left a good estate to his family, his daughters did not return to the school. They occupied themselves, instead, with the duties of home and social life, and with the sacred charge of comforting their mother.

Mr. and Mrs. Childress had been among the early settlers of Middle Tennessee, and were persons of high standing in those days. Mr. Childress was a successful farmer and a man of business, and his family lived in the ease which competency gives. Their home was a frame house, but as good and as comfortable as any country home of that time. Living only two miles from Murfreesborough, they were in easy reach of the advantages of the small town, which contained a Presbyterian Church, a tavern,

and a few shops. Mr. Childress often invited to his home for meals, or to remain over night, friends who lived in the town, or who were staying there temporarily. This hospitality was continued by the family after his death. Especially did the Childress's household become a place for gatherings of congenial company as the girls grew into young womanhood.

Murfreesborough had become the capital of the State in 1820. James Knox Polk was then a rising young lawyer and a member of the State Legislature from Maury County. He was twenty-seven years old at this time, yet he is said to have been very youthful in appearance. His personality was considered pleasing, though he was never commanding in stature. He was as courteous and dignified in manners as when he attended school. But he was the exact opposite of the magnetic, sunshiny Sarah Childress, and her playful wit and ready repartee formed a striking counterpart to his staid character. She made an indelible impression on the serious-minded young legislator, from their first meeting; and very soon his labors at the courthouse were pleasantly alternated with visits to Miss Childress. He came coolly, it is said, put his feet under the widow's social board, and partook of all the country pleasure; and before Mrs. Childress knew what was happening, he had her daughter's heart in his keeping.

"With her teens went her maidenhood," says Lydia Gordon, for Sarah, at the age of twenty, became the wife of the popular politician. There was merrymaking for days; the popularity of the

bride and the prominent position of the groom lent special zest to the event. The marriage took place on New Year's Day, 1824, and there were parties and dinners at the homes of relatives and friends of the young couple for a week afterward. They had to decline one very special dinner however, in order to leave for Columbia, the groom's home, in time to reach there for a large reception given by the parents of Mr. Polk.

This beautiful town was the county seat of Maury County, "the garden spot of Tennessee," so called because the fertility of the region is as far-famed as that of the blue-grass counties of Kentucky. All Mr. Polk's relatives lived in this section, and he and his bride settled among them and began life in a small cottage. Sarah was warmly welcomed by her husband's family, and she always retained their kindest consideration and most affectionate regard by her beauty and amiability.

The first year of Mr. Polk's married life was spent in uneventful, but happy, domestic and social pursuits. Her husband attended assiduously to the duties of his law practice in the courts of Maury and adjoining counties, and soon his abilities and his force of character began to win the esteem and confidence of his fellow citizens. The following year he was suggested as a candidate for Congress, and his active canvass was successful, because he brought to it that same untiring, serious energy which he applied to everything that he set out to win.

His competitors were men of age, experience, and intelligence, while he was young, comparatively inexperienced, and unknown; but he displayed so much

activity and instilled into his supporters so much of his own ardent zeal that he was soon regarded as a most formidable opponent. He dashed from place to place throughout his district with such rapidity that his opponents were reduced to a kind of paralyzed despair. Polk spoke everywhere with an animation and an ardor which appeared to flow from his heart as well as from his head, and which had the force of what seemed his own conviction. The result was that, in the autumn, he left his young wife in the cottage at Columbia, and started on horseback for Washington and Congress. The next fall Mr. Polk again went to Washington and this time Mrs. Polk went with him. The roads were rough, and the fatigue of the long journey was great, but such obstacles could not deter her. The experience brought back in vivid memory the much enjoyed journey of her fifteenth year, when she had ridden over hundreds of miles to the old Moravian school at Salem, though it was not on horseback that she traveled this time, but in their own carriage, attended by two of their servants.

At Washington, Mrs. Polk's large understanding and sound sense, together with the winning grace of her attractive person and character, were readily recognized. She soon became as great a favorite with all the dignitaries of this society as she had been at home in a simpler one. Her religious preference was for the Presbyterian sect, the denomination of her parents; and she became a regular attendant in the congregation of the First Presbyterian Church, on Four-and-a-half Street. Mr. Polk accompanied her to services regularly during the

fourteen consecutive years that he remained in Congress.

With uncommon intelligence, it is said, Mrs. Polk threw herself into her husband's career, and entered with delight into the social pleasures of the capital. She made herself mistress of all the arts of the political world; yet she was ever gracious and womanly, and so unobtrusive that she was a charming companion. She was able at all times to enter into the discussions of public men and quickly to comprehend their plans, and she was not always looking for a lull in the conversation to express her own opinions. Men of both parties often sat at her hospitable board, but with a charming tact she kept politics in the background, and, by her ready wit and rare entertaining powers, created a delightful atmosphere for her guests.

In 1839 Mr. Polk declined to enter the contest for reelection to Congress, since he preferred to be a candidate for the office of Governor of Tennessee. His opponent was the then Governor, the Honorable Newton Cannon. Polk's ambition was aroused, and he went in to win. Day and night he rode on horseback, making speeches all over the State. People said that he never seemed to know weariness and that he never had his shoes off during the entire campaign. From her retreat in the Columbia cottage, Mrs. Polk anxiously watched the conflict, spending many bitter hours of concern over the arduous labor her husband's frequent letters described. Polk's private life and his record as an honest politician, combined with his frank manners and thrilling eloquence, won the favor of the plain people. He is

said to have offered no terms and made no bargains; he gave his past integrity as his gauge. At this time he won the name of "Napoleon of the Stump," a title conceded by both parties to have been merited. As in the Congressional race fifteen years before, so now success crowned his efforts, and he and his wife went to live at the Governor's mansion in Nashville.

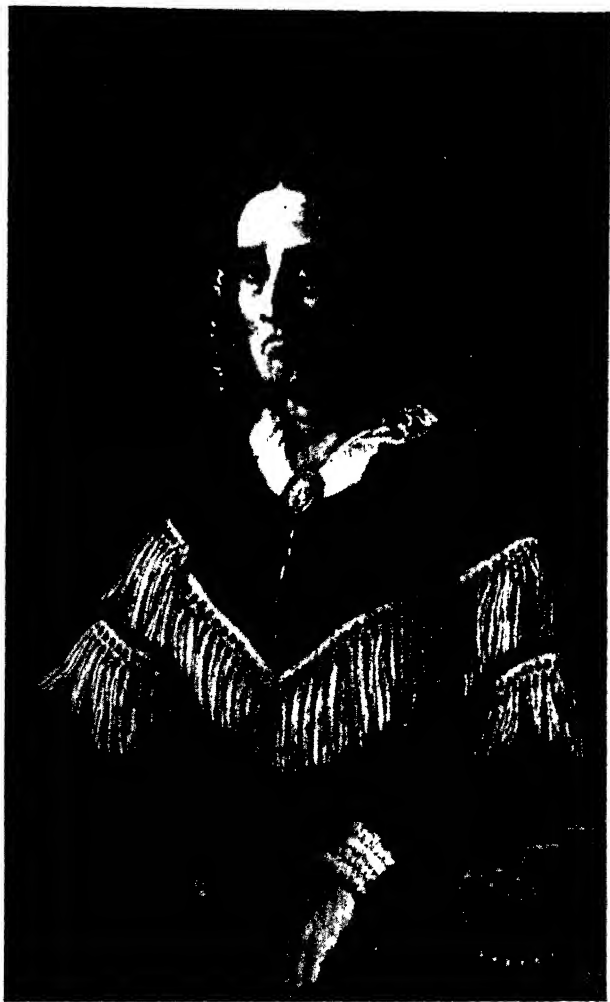
Governor and Mrs. Polk found this home to be directly opposite the home of Colonel Samuel D. Morgan, an active leader of the Whig party. Their political differences, however, did not prevent a genuine friendship from springing up between the two families; and the Governor and his wife were often invited by the Morgans to dine. Mr. Polk generally declined, saying that he could not lose half a day just to dine; but he always wished his wife to go, and she usually represented him on these occasions. Mrs. Polk would explain that her husband was the hardest-working man she knew; that when she went into his study and reminded him that he worked too hard, he would take up a paper and quietly reply, "Sarah, here is something I wish you to read for me"—thereby setting her to work also!

Governor Polk was a candidate for reelection, but he was defeated; and Mrs. Polk had once more the pleasing prospect of returning to the first little home she had known as a bride. For although she was gifted with a keen appreciation of social life, she always welcomed these returns to Columbia. About their small cottage there lingered, for her, the glamor of young love, deepening into the sweeter pleasure of congenial companionship.

James Polk was married in the year in which

Andrew Jackson lost the presidential race to John Quincy Adams. Polk opposed Adams through his entire administration, and in the next campaign used all his influence to defeat him and place Jackson in office. Three years after Polk's term as Governor had expired, he was nominated for President. The news of the nomination was the first message sent to Tennessee over telegraph wires. Jackson, a very old man at this time, showed that he remembered what Polk had done for him and that he was grateful. He did all that he could to elect Polk, and although exceedingly feeble, he went to the polls and cast for him what proved to be his last vote.

Mrs. Polk was a childless wife in the full bloom of her maturity, when her husband was elected President. She had already won a high place in Washington society during the winters she had spent there as a Senator's wife. She could step to the position of First Lady with a greater assurance of welcome than any who had gone there before her. Years later, she wrote, "The White House was the abode of pleasure while I was there." She is said to have pleased every caller at the weekly receptions, with her gracious words of welcome. At large dinners in honor of distinguished persons, her dignity and courtesy impressed every one. It is recorded that foreign ministers often remarked that not a crowned head of Europe could queen it more royally than did the wife of the Republican President. Poets penned sonnets to her, and the last Sunday of her stay in Washington was a day of mourning to the pastor and the members of the Presbyterian Church which she attended.



SARAH CHILDRESS POLK  
(*Mrs. James K. Polk*)





James Knox Polk had climbed from the State Legislature to the Presidency, supported and sustained in every undertaking by the tender love and hearty coöperation of his wife. It is recorded that often a letter would come to him, asking if he could be in a certain place by the next day, as some one wanted to confer with him. His first words would be, "Sarah, can you be ready to go away with me to-night?" She would always go. When she was an old lady, she would tell such things with a laugh, and remark, "I cannot find fault with the ladies now for going away from home so much, because I went so often with Mr. Polk." But their departure from the White House was their last journey in common. He had worked without ceasing, and though hardly past the prime of manhood, his hair was blanched to a snowy whiteness, and he bore himself with an air of languor and exhaustion.

He had bought a handsome home in Nashville some time before his term as President had expired. The grounds covered a whole square in the finest part of the city. This home has since come to be known as "Polk Place." With ample wealth, he was returning to this new home to take his rest and to enjoy the ease he had so laboriously earned. He went from the capital to New Orleans, where he took the steamer up the Mississippi. It was the year during which cholera was raging throughout the entire valley, and he had a slight attack on board. He rallied, however, and reached home in good spirits, where he at once began to lay out his grounds and to plan improvements. He was also projecting a tour of Europe, when the cholera returned. At

first it was believed to be chronic diarrhœa, and no alarm was felt for a time; but as the medicine that was given him had no apparent effect, fear crept into Mrs. Polk's heart, and she sent to Columbia for the physician who had attended him for more than twenty years.

The disease was checked, but a strange lassitude hung about him, and he seemed to have no rallying powers. His wife watched him in anguish, and his aged mother, who lived with them, would creep into his room and drop on her knees beside his bed to pray for him. Nothing, however, could stay the weakness into which he sank deeper and deeper. On the fifteenth of June, 1849, at fifty-three years of age, he died. His friends said of him that he achieved that which is usually considered impossible,—he came into riches and power through politics, and kept the whiteness of his soul.

Her husband's death was by far the greatest grief happy, prosperous Mrs. Polk had known. Time softened her bereavement, but life had lost its charm. For nearly forty years afterward, she remained a widow at Polk Place, growing more and more devout in her religious faith. As age crept on, she began to long for some companionship for her lonely hours, so filled with shadows of the past. She therefore adopted a niece, who remained with her as long as she lived.

After her husband's death, Mrs. Polk, through the remainder of her life, was treated with the respect and distinction to which her high position entitled her. For years, the legislature of the State visited her in a body on New Year's Day; and all delega-

tions of Masons, Odd Fellows, Sons of Temperance, and Members of the General Assembly of Presbyterians that gathered in Nashville sought an admittance to Polk Place to pay their respects to its celebrated mistress.

## CHAPTER XII

### ZACHARY TAYLOR

(1849-1850)

MANY of the early Presidents saw war service, but Zachary Taylor was the first professional soldier; and there has been but one other,—General Grant. Some authorities give Kentucky as Taylor's birth-place, but he really belongs by birth among the eight presidential sons of Virginia.

He was born in Orange County, Virginia, on September 24, 1784. When he was less than a year old his father, Colonel Richard Taylor, emigrated to Kentucky. There Zachary's childhood and youth were spent, and there his character was formed, amidst the dangers and privations that are ever incident to frontier life. He was descended from a distinguished English family, some of whom emigrated to America and settled in the eastern part of Virginia in 1692. The good stock showed its quality in the new world. Among his family connections are numbered the Madisons, the Lees, the Barbours, the Pendletons, the Conways, and others who have rendered illustrious service to the civil, political, and military history of Virginia.

Zachary Taylor's father held a colonel's commission throughout the Revolution and is said to have served with great valor during that long struggle, much of the time with Washington, whose confidence

and esteem he retained under all difficulties. His mother was Mary Strother, of whom not much is known besides the facts that she came of excellent family and was married to Colonel Taylor—then thirty-five—when she was but nineteen years of age.

They started housekeeping on a Virginia plantation. In that home were born to them three children, of whom Zachary was the youngest, before they migrated to Kentucky and settled near Louisville. This wilderness of a State was the scene of frequent fierce and bloody struggles between various Indian tribes, as well as of many murderous excursions against the white population. In these encounters Colonel Taylor bore a conspicuous part, and by his bold daring and ceaseless vigilance, made his name a terror to the merciless foe. When peace was finally established, he held many honorable and responsible positions, and became one of the framers of the Kentucky constitution. He also represented Jefferson County and the city of Louisville for many years in both branches of the legislature, and was a member of the electoral college which voted for Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and Clay.

With such a heritage, and with an environment shaped by many offensive and defensive skirmishes, it was only natural that Zachary Taylor should, almost from his earliest youth, manifest a strong desire for military life. His keenest enjoyment, as a boy, was to play soldier and to direct mimic battles among all the young patriots of the settlement. The battles were not all in play, for even the crude educational advantages afforded by the little log school-house were attended by real and grim warfare.

Every boy big enough brought a shotgun, and these were stacked within easy reach while the class was in session. On one occasion, it is said, some of Zachary Taylor's schoolmates were actually scalped by the Indians, not a hundred yards from where he and his brothers had separated from them. On another occasion, when a number of these savages were known to be in the woods not far from the school, one that was shot was discovered to be wearing a British uniform. Think with what anxiety a mother sent children to school under such circumstances! As soon as children were big enough to start to school, mothers began to watch them with fearful hearts, while the fathers of the settlement daily drilled them in the method of trailing Indians, and showed them how to defend themselves if attacked by more than one warrior at a time.

The Kentucky log schoolhouse did not afford a very good practical education, much less any opportunity for an ornamental one. Yet, from these scanty advantages Zachary Taylor gained a love of learning that enabled him to overcome difficulties that would have kept most boys from ever becoming students. His parents had taken a select stock of books to this wilderness with them, and Zachary supplemented what knowledge he gained at school by studying these books at home. It is not recorded that he ever had a private tutor or attended any college, but his active, inquiring mind and his strong, retentive memory more than made up for what would otherwise have been the barest sort of English education.

The Taylor family was a sizable one, Zachary

having five brothers and three sisters. The farm was large enough to furnish plenty of work for all, but in 1802 Colonel Taylor secured a commission for his eldest son, William, to enter the army. This doubled the desire that Zachary had always manifested for military life, but he had to remain at home and help with the work of cutting down trees and burning off underbrush, so that the land might be extended for cultivation. Two years later, however, he ran away to join a military company and remained with it a few months, participating in its drills and being subject to its discipline. When the storm blew over he returned home and helped, as usual, to cultivate the farm, until the death of his brother, who held the rank of lieutenant in the regular army. Then he applied for a commission to fill his place.

In connection with this appointment, Ida Donnelly Peters tells a pretty story in her book, *Girls Of Long Ago*, about Zachary Taylor's meeting with his future wife, Margaret Smith, the daughter of a Maryland farmer. It was the winter Margaret was fourteen, and night was closing in on a very cold day, so the story goes. The Smith family had settled themselves around a big kitchen fire to listen to their father reading from the *Annapolis Gazette*, when a "Halloo!" was heard from the road. The Smith boys and their father quickly opened the farmhouse door and found two young lads seeking shelter for the night. One was a short, sturdy fellow, with very bright eyes and a round, humorous face, who said that his name was Zachary Taylor and that he was from Kentucky. The Smiths made them welcome, and the short, sturdy lad explained that he and his



friend were on their way to Washington to visit his cousin, Mr. James Madison, who was then Secretary of State. They wished to obtain commissions in the army, Zachary Taylor told them, and if his cousin could not help them to do so, he was going to join as a private soldier.

Since Mrs. Smith was dead, Margaret was her father's housekeeper, and she soon had an appetizing supper on the table for the two strangers. Warmed by the bright fire and refreshed by the good food, the boys began to talk about their home in the far-away West, where the red men were still making life very uncertain for the settlers. Margaret, though shy to a painful degree, listened as did all the rest of the family to their father's questions and to the boys' answers about the hardships and dangers of the Kentucky frontier.

When they rose to take their candles to light themselves to bed, Margaret noticed that the thick, short boy limped very badly. She called her father's attention to it, and Mr. Smith insisted that something be done for the cause of the limping. It was an old arrow wound in his ankle, the youth explained, that had become rubbed and swollen from his two weeks of hard riding from his home. While her father had young Taylor remove his boot and sock, Margaret heated a basin of water and fetched some liniment with which to ease the soreness. Modestly kneeling before the young man, she gently bathed the inflamed ankle, applied the liniment, and bound it very skilfully. To his bashful words of thanks the little maiden curtsied with confusion, and took the basin away.

The next morning when the two young men rode on their way, Zachary, it is said, remarked to his friend that little Margaret was a dear child. His friend replied, with a grin, that she was likely to grow into a dearer woman, and that he might do well to come that way again. He did, a few years later, and came very unexpectedly upon Margaret Smith while she was riding an old farm horse to a quilting party in the neighborhood. The fast galloping and the rattle of the young soldier's accoutrements as he came up behind her frightened the farm horse, which dashed off in a panic straight toward Chesapeake Bay. Bravely Margaret Smith clung to the horse's mane, until the rider overtook her and stopped her by clutching the bridle. Then both dismounted. Zachary quieted the animal with steady words and soothing pats, after which he apologized for galloping up behind her so suddenly as to frighten her horse. Margaret did not recognize the young soldier, but Zachary Taylor thought he saw in the girl before him the child who had bandaged his ankle a few years before. He told her that he could not go on his way with any peace of mind unless she permitted him to see her safely to her destination. The quilting party proved to be at a near-by house, so they walked the rest of the way, Zachary leading the two horses.

The hospitable Marylanders at the party would not permit Taylor to continue his journey until he had remained long enough to partake of the food they had prepared for their guests; and, as he saw other men and boys arriving with the company, he decided to stay. He was introduced simply as "the

young man from the West." Every one was eager to talk with him or to hear him talk; that is, every one except Margaret Smith, who grew suddenly too bashful to speak.

It was the custom, at a quilting party, for the men who had brought their families, and for those who had ridden with the young ladies, to gather at the end of the room opposite to where the quilting frames were stretched, or in another room, and to talk of farming or politics while the important work of quilting was being done. As different girls finished their portion of the quilting, they would leave the frames to talk to some gallant, or the young men would go over and talk to them. Zachary's steady gaze at the sweet, flushed face of Margaret Smith failed to draw an answering glance, so he resolutely went to her side as soon as the girl next to her had moved away. But nothing that he could say would cause her to look up or to answer him. He told her who he was and reminded her of the night she had bound up his sore ankle; but she sewed on without lifting her eyes. Finally he hunted in a sewing-basket and found a needle which he threaded with black thread. He then proceeded to stitch, almost under her eyes, the question, "Won't you speak to me?" Surprised, and alarmed lest the others see what he had done, she commanded with a flashing look that he rip the letters out at once. He laughingly obeyed, and declared that he was going to ride home with her.

On the way, Margaret lost some of her shyness, and before the evening in her father's home was over, she and Zachary Taylor were talking and

laughing freely together. He told her that he had never forgotten her, and spoke of his loneliness and longing for companionship in the dreary places where he had to trail the savages, a longing he had come to recognize with unspeakable force since the day before. And the next morning, when he went on his way to Washington, where he had to transact the business that had brought him east, he carried Margaret's promise with him.

Taylor returned as soon as his business in Washington could be completed, and married Margaret Smith. Very soon after the wedding, she accompanied him to a post in New Orleans. General Oliver Otis Howard says, in his biography of Taylor, that he was married on June 18th, 1810 in a little log house on the Taylor farm, about six miles above the city of Louisville, which indicates that Miss Smith went to Kentucky to be married. Others say that Margaret was married in her father's home in Maryland, on a farm which was part of the estate owned by Joshua Johnson, father of Mrs. John Quincy Adams. Mr. Johnson lived in this rich farming district of Maryland before he became American Consul at London, where Quincy Adams met and married his daughter.

Margaret had just turned twenty when she married her soldier-husband. Against the strong advice of family and friends, she went with him to whatever post he was assigned. Wherever his home was, from the day they were married to the day of his death, there was she to be found, were it tent, log cabin, or barracks. When her children were born, she kept them with her only through early infancy, then sent them either to her own relatives or to her husband's.

The savages' trail was no place for children. She wanted them in the settlements so that they might attend school and receive comforts and advantages such as she could not give them without a permanent home. It was not that she was lacking in mother love; her heart no doubt ached for the companionship of her children as much as any mother's. Her great, unselfish spirit was shown in her attitude toward her children, as it was in the love she bore her husband. Her presence in his daily life was the solace of his existence, and her well prepared meals kept his body properly nourished for the important task of defending forts and personally superintending the varied and difficult labors imposed upon him.

At the beginning of the war of 1812, Taylor, promoted to the rank of captain by President Madison, was sent to command a fort built by General Harrison on the Wabash. It was his first individual charge. The garrison contained only fifty men, most of them worn down and ill from long, severe service. One night, soon after Captain Taylor took charge, a large band of Indians crept stealthily upon the fort, completely surrounding it and setting fire to the lower blockhouse before letting out their savage war-whoop. The soldiers were aroused by the wild yell, and, on looking out of their cabins, saw a sight that would strike terror to the bravest heart. But their captain was alert. With splendid courage he and his pitiful little command of fifty men faced the charge of those four hundred warriors.

The horrors of that night can never be told in words. Sick and well fought side by side, encouraged to do or die by their gallant little captain, who risked

his life over and over again directing and trying to save his men. Sunrise brought victory, and a sight of the savages disappearing into the wilderness, howling with rage. Taylor's command counted two dead and two wounded. The magnificent repulse filled the country with the highest admiration for the young captain. His was considered the very first order of military talent. For the daring courage of that night's work, and for his other services, the brevet rank of major was conferred upon him.

He was then given a frontier post in the West, where, for three years, he saw no active service. With the end of the war, there came a reduction in armed forces. Taylor was not dismissed but was given a lower rank. This act on the part of the army chiefs always touches a soldier's pride. Captain Taylor resigned his command and took up farming. This made Mrs. Taylor perfectly happy, for she could now have both her husband and her children with her, and could enjoy the life she had known as a girl. But it was a short-lived happiness; for very soon his rank was restored, and, with his return to the army, he was ordered to Green Bay, Michigan. There, for years, he led a tedious, monotonous life in the very heart of a savage wilderness, away from every one except his faithful, devoted Margaret.

The Black Hawk War brought him into service again, and, though he is said to have had a subordinate part, he was promoted to colonel.

When this war was over, he again sank into the comparative obscurity of defending frontiers. For twenty-four years in all, his wife ministered to him in out-of-the-way places, deprived of every little

comfort so dear to the hearts of all women. It has been said of Mrs. Taylor that hers was the true spirit of an American heroine. She accepted with patience the circumstances accompanying frontier warfare, and adorned them with an uncomplaining spirit and with a pleasing faculty for establishing, in a wilderness, comfortable and homelike surroundings.

One son and three daughters had been born to the Taylors. When these children were grown and educated, they were permitted to visit their parents frequently, at the different forts where they were stationed. Both Colonel and Mrs. Taylor were strongly opposed to their daughters marrying into the army. They must not lead such lives as they had led—lives without a home; and what was of much greater importance was the fact, familiar to them, that so many of the army officers led far from correct lives. Non-military men were the proper sort of husbands for their daughters, and no others would be considered.

Such commands have not always been obeyed, nor were they in this case. While the colonel was away on military inspection, Jefferson Davis, a young lieutenant fresh from West Point, met and wooed Sarah Taylor, the second daughter of the family. The parents' consent to the marriage was asked and refused, but Sarah, a beautiful child of fifteen, was persuaded by her dashing young lover to elope with him. In the face of Colonel Taylor's bitter wrath, young Davis resigned from the army and took his child bride to his home in Mississippi. There she died a few months later without her father's forgiveness. Colonel Taylor's scorn against this son-in-law

knew no bounds, and when his daughter died, he was embittered afresh against the man who had robbed him of her. His grief over her death was mingled with shame that she had made a marriage which he could not, according to his principles, recognize. Many years passed before he came to realize that it was possible to change his principles.

He was an old man then, and he had seen many victorious battles before coming to Buena Vista during the war with Mexico. While making his advance across the Sabine, he had called for volunteers from Mississippi and Louisiana. The sons of the first families had formed a regiment and had chosen Jefferson Davis for their Colonel. The young man figured on every battle-field, it is said; but, by some tacit understanding, he and General Taylor never met. When the day seemed lost at Buena Vista, General Taylor thundered to his running troops to turn and recharge, and Davis's men were the first to reform. Standing his ground, the young colonel appealed to the other regiments and commanded them to "reform behind that wall," pointing to his Mississippians. Encouraged by the steadiness of the "wall" of men, they did reform, and Davis, giving the Southern yell, led the dash that inspired the most reckless fighting done during the Mexican war. "They fought like Titans," says H. Montgomery in his biography of Taylor, "the Mexicans said, like devils." The dauntless lover proved that he was no laggard in war. Perhaps the thought that he was fighting under the eye of the father who had never forgiven his dead wife nerved him to the onslaught. When the Mexicans broke and ran, half of the brave



Mississippians were stretched upon the ground. Colonel Davis himself was severely wounded, though he sat astride his horse until the day was won.

General Taylor, watching the fight, is said almost to have danced with joy over the victory. He and Davis met for the first time, and Taylor embraced him as a son, while the tears of both men mingled for the young wife who had slept for so many years on the banks of the Mississippi.

The work of old "Rough and Ready," as his soldiers lovingly called him, was done. The duck-legged, dumpy old General, with his plain, blunt face, was kind and honest, and as brave as a lion. "General Taylor never surrenders," is what he said when Santa Anna, with his twenty thousand trained Mexicans, had sent him word to surrender with his five thousand Americans. Then he rode along his ranks and said to his men, "Soldiers, I intend to stay here, not only as long as a man remains, but as long as a piece of a man is left." Rough he could be, but he was always ready, and men counted it a glory to die for him, as Santa Anna learned when his twenty thousand Mexicans were put to flight by the five thousand Americans at Buena Vista.

Taylor could now return in triumph to his wife in the Spanish cottage. But that small home that Mrs. Taylor had enjoyed for five years was to remain private no longer. The General's achievement in Mexico filled the people with such intense admiration that it suggested him to the Whig party as an available candidate for the coming presidential campaign. At first he pronounced the idea absurd, and protested his unfitness; but the old soldier was over-



MARGARET SMITH TAYLOR  
(*Mrs. Zachary Taylor*)



ruled, and he yielded on condition that he be requested to give no pledges. He would be the people's candidate, he said, and if elected, the people's President.

His war victories and his sterling integrity made him a successful candidate, and Mrs. Taylor was genuinely distressed. She spoke of the General's becoming President as a thing to be lamented, and declared that the habits he had acquired as an army man would not permit him to live under the constraints of city life. To her intimate friends she said that it was a plot to deprive her of his society, and to shorten his life by unnecessary care and responsibility.

Sixteen months after General Taylor became President, his devoted wife, kneeling in agony beside his bedside, recalled in bitterness of spirit the words she had prophetically spoken when the subject of the presidency was first mentioned. He had attended the laying of the cornerstone of the Washington Monument on the Fourth of July, 1850. He rode in the procession in an open carriage, and sat bare-headed upon the stand during the formalities of the occasion. Once he remarked that he had never felt such heat in Florida or in Mexico; and to quench the thirst created by this exposure, he drank too freely of ice water when he returned to the White House. Within a few hours he was taken with spasms of intense pain, which lasted for five long days and nights before terminating in death.

Mrs. Taylor would not believe that he could die surrounded with so many comforts, and loved so intensely by his family,—he who had been through so

much and had escaped so many dangers. Clasp- ing her hand, he looked into her eyes and said, "I am not afraid to die. I have tried to do my duty."

Those were his last words. The woman who had bravely faced so many partings when he went to the battle-field, and who had so often instilled courage and Christian resignation into the hearts of others, gave way completely to hysterical grief. When not shrieking so as to be heard in the street, she would lie insensible for long minutes at a time; and the grief of her children was as pitiful as her own.

Mrs. Taylor could not be persuaded to linger a day in the White House, after the funeral was over. Nor did she want to return to the Spanish cottage at Baton Rouge, which had been the only house in her married life that she had ever called home. Her daughter, Betty, and the latter's husband, Major Bliss, took her to friends of her youth who lived in Kentucky, but her grief was too fresh to bear their loving sympathy. She soon went to her son's home in Pascagoula, Louisiana. There, two years later, she found eternal relief from her earthly sorrow.

## CHAPTER XIII

### MILLARD FILLMORE

(1850-1853)

No fewer than three different months have been given as the one in which Millard Fillmore was born. In one collection of sketches, published by the Buffalo Historical Society, two dates are found—January 7, 1800 and April 26, 1800. Other historians say February 7, 1800; so we are assured of the exact year, if not of the month. He was the second child and eldest son of Nathaniel and Phoebe Millard Fillmore, and was born in Locke (now Summer Hill), Cayuga County, New York. This place was then a mere outpost of the western part of that State, to which Fillmore's father, with a brother, had emigrated from Bennington, Vermont.

Locke was in what was known as the old Military Tract. There Nathaniel Fillmore and his brother cut down trees and built a log house large enough to shelter both of their families. During the next four years they cleared a good many acres of land and began to get a sizable farm under promising cultivation, only to lose it through a bad title. This was a blessing in disguise, however, as Millard Fillmore claims in an autobiographical sketch that the location was too high and cold, and one of the poorest in the whole Military Tract. His father then moved

to Niles, where he leased a farm that was wholly uncultivated and covered with heavy timber. So the work of home-making in a wilderness had to begin a second time. This farm was about one mile west of Skaneateles Lake, and a mile from the small hamlet called Newhope.

The first school Millard Fillmore remembered was in this little hamlet. It was taught in an old deserted log house by a woman of very limited education, he writes. There, at the age of six or seven, he learned his alphabet. When Millard was ten years old, a man by the name of Amos Castle was employed to instruct the children in spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic. He especially drilled them in Webster's spelling book, writes Mr. Fillmore: "I think I went through that book without missing the spelling of a word; but I did not learn the meaning of a single one." There was no such thing as a dictionary in the school, and Fillmore never saw one until he was eighteen.

He could not be spared from the farm work to attend school in summer, and in winter school was taught for only two or three months. "Consequently," he writes, "I forgot nearly as much in summer as I learned in winter." He continued to work on his father's farm until he was fifteen, hoeing, plowing, chopping down trees, mowing, reaping, and doing all the kinds of work incident to the clearing and cultivating of a new farm. His father's misfortune in losing his first farm was scarcely greater, Mr. Fillmore writes, than that of finding a hard, clayey soil in the second. This gave the elder Fillmore a great distaste for farming, and he became

anxious that his sons should follow some other occupation. His means did not justify him, or them, in aspiring to any profession, so he directed their minds to trades. Hence, in 1815, Millard was apprenticed to Zaccheus Cheney and Alvan Kellogg, who carried on the business of carding and cloth-dressing at Newhope, one mile from his father's home.

He was not indentured, he writes, but there was a verbal bargain that he was to serve during the season of wool-carding and cloth-dressing, which usually comprised the months from June to December, until he was twenty. For his services he was to be taught the trade, and would receive fifty-five dollars for each year except the last, for which he was to have one hundred dollars. That was considered sufficient money for his clothing and pocket change. The remainder of his time and earnings belonged to his father, who had a large family and a sickly wife for whom to provide. He writes that he was well pleased with his situation, as the apparent impossibility of attaining to anything better suppressed hope and enforced contentment. He went to school during the winter months of January, February, and March for the next two years, and in April and May devoted himself to the work of his father's farm. He was seventeen at this time, and had had no access whatever to books other than the Bible, a hymn book, and an almanac, which, together, constituted his father's library. But the year he was eighteen there was started in Newhope a small circulating library in which he at once managed to acquire a share, at a cost of two dollars. Also, about this time, he came to know Miss Abigail Powers, a young woman of



unusual culture, who became the village school-teacher.

This lady may have been instrumental in starting the circulating library, as she was a great lover of books; but of that we are not told. She did, however, take an interest in the tall, good-looking young shareholder, and she began to direct his reading and studies from the time their acquaintance was first made.

Abigail Powers could well appreciate Millard Fillmore's desire and struggle for an education. One might think that she inspired his industry in that respect but for the fact that he had struggled to learn from the moment he began to repeat his letters after the indifferent teacher of his sixth year. Abigail was the youngest child of her parents. Her father had been a Baptist clergyman in Stillwater, Saratoga County, New York. This minister, Dr. Lemuel Powers, was from Massachusetts, and is said to have been one of the descendants of Henry Leland, of Sherborn, and a cousin and lifelong friend of the eccentric and talented John Leland. He was not a wealthy man, but his profession was much honored. Removed by only one decade from the martyr memories of New England, he was singularly free from the stern righteousness usual to individuals holding the dignified office of minister in those days. He died while his daughter was in her infancy, and Mrs. Powers, finding that her income was not sufficient to keep up the liberal manner of living to which she had been accustomed in her husband's lifetime, moved, with her brother and some other families, to a frontier settlement in Cayuga County.

Here, in the backwoods of New York State, where the borders of an adjoining settlement were the limits of civilization, Abigail Powers began the struggle for an education at the age of ten. She had inherited a strong, studious mind from her father. With his collection of books, which constituted the largest share of household goods that her mother had taken to the pioneer district, she rapidly progressed in knowledge. Her ambition to learn, and her mother's assistance, made her progress such that she was able to assume the duties of school-teacher at a very early age. Their reduced circumstances would not admit of her attending any academy of higher learning until she was able to teach a summer school to pay her winter's tuition. Alternating, thus, between teaching and studying, she became, for those days, a scholarly woman; and she was regarded as all the more remarkable for having mounted the rugged hill of wisdom by her own patient toil and unceasing labor.

The varied experiences of Abigail Powers's life and the hardships of the pioneer existence which she began at so early an age developed all the latent strength of her body, as well as of her mind. Therefore, at twenty, when she became the school-teacher of Newhope, she was a tall, commanding figure, expressive more of strength than of beauty. She is described as very fair of complexion, and her picture shows features of a large and generous mould. The fair and luxuriant curls that fell about her finely shaped head are said to have been her chief claim to personal beauty.

Abigail was a young woman when her mother re-

married. While she continued her occupation of teaching, she went to live at the home of a relative. Her life, uneventful up to this time, now began to take on color and interest, as the acquaintance with the eighteen-year-old boy began to ripen into friendship. Millard Fillmore's love of books and ambition for study exactly matched her own. Though she was two years his senior, he was tall and large, looking so much of a man as to make their difference in age hardly noticeable. At first he revered the fair school-teacher for her scholarly learning, and her sympathetic interest fired his studious efforts to fresh and more zealous endeavors. With the first money he could spare, after paying the two dollars for his share in the circulating library, he bought a dictionary. He had two years more to serve as an apprentice to the clothier, and he would prop the dictionary on a desk which he passed every few minutes while feeding the carding machines, in this way studying words and their meanings. He says in his autobiographical sketch, "I had a moment between feeding each machine, and in those moments I read a word and its definition and fixed it in my mind."

Thus this hard-working, studious boy began to attract attention by the progress he was making. Some one suggested to Millard's father that it was quite possible that the boy could be something more than a carder of wool and a dresser of cloth. His father, at last despairing of ever making a success of farming on the hard soil of the acres he had leased in Nile, had moved to Montville, Cayuga County. A Judge Walter Wood resided there, and the notion that people considered Millard of a promising mind



ABIGAIL POWERS FILLMORE  
(*Mrs. Millard Fillmore*)



caused Mr. Fillmore to ask Judge Wood to give the youth a trial in his office. Of this incident Millard Fillmore writes that when his mother told him of his father's effort to help him, he was so overcome with gratitude that he burst into tears.

Judge Wood was a man advanced in years, with farms and tenants widely scattered over the old Military Tract. A youth as attentive to business as Millard Fillmore could render the Judge valuable service in going from place to place to look after the titles subject to litigation. The Judge offered to loan Millard money on easy payment, with which to buy the rest of his time from the clothier, as he still had a year to serve as an apprentice after his first winter with Judge Wood. This arrangement was accepted with much gratitude on the part of Fillmore; at last he could be free from the irksome labor of feeding machines and could spend the greater part of his time studying in Judge Wood's excellent library.

His desire for learning and advancement now became a passion, and it was kept at fever heat by the stimulation of the lofty-minded school-teacher. This friendship, fast ripening into something sweeter and deeper than mere sympathetic companionship, was responsible for Fillmore's impatience to forge ahead in the mastery of his profession of law. During his second winter with Judge Wood, he began to teach school as a means of earning money to pay off his loan. He was able to keep up with his studies, while teaching the school, by borrowing law books from Judge Wood and studying early mornings and evenings. In the summer he returned to work in the office, attending to the farming and tenant business.

He continued his study, and received excellent training from the Judge's methodical example in business habits.

The third winter Fillmore passed the same way, but in the summer of that year he was invited to deliver an address at the Fourth of July celebration in Montville. He writes of this address as having no merit, but it did give him some publicity. He was offered three dollars by a listener who had a case in an adjoining county, to pettifog for him. Fillmore, needing the money, went, and the suit was successfully settled in his favor. Judge Wood, a Quaker in religious sentiment and very decided in opinion, was very much opposed to any but the most dignified presentation of the law. He soon heard of Millard's pettifogging, and took his young clerk severely to task. Citing several cases of injurious effect from such procedures, he demanded that Fillmore promise not to do it again. "I pleaded my poverty," writes Fillmore, "and I became suspicious, perhaps unjustly, that he was more anxious to keep me a drudge in his business to look after his tenants than he was to make a lawyer of me." The old Judge was inexorable, and, when Fillmore would not give his word, he said that they must separate.

This was probably one of the most depressing times in Millard Fillmore's life. He was deeply in love now with a woman not only his senior by two years, and well educated, but the daughter of an honored minister, which placed her socially above him. He saw all his hopes dashed to earth, but he had firmly made up his mind to become a lawyer, and that resolution was sustained and encouraged by the

object of his love. So, with assumed cheerfulness, he started to walk from Montville in Cayuga County to his father's home, which was now in Aurora, Erie County, with the three dollars that he had been paid for pettifogging, in his pocket; and, like Micawber, hoping that something would "turn up."

Something did. A relative of his had a suit pending before a justice of the peace, which was to be tried a few days after he reached Aurora. He was asked to take the case, and succeeded in winning it. That brought him some notice in that vicinity, and several other cases were offered him during that winter. As the rules of the courts then stood, it required seven years of study in an attorney's office before one could be admitted to the practice of law. His main objective, therefore, was to get into some law office. Yet no opportunity presented itself during that first winter after he left Judge Wood. He was offered a school in Aurora, and attended what cases he could obtain on Saturdays, so as not to interfere with his duties as teacher. In the spring, he decided to walk to Buffalo. He was an entire stranger in that city, but he obtained a district school, which enabled him to pay his way. Later he entered, as a clerk, the offices of Asa Rice and Joseph Clary. He continued to teach and to study for one year more. Then, in 1823, the court of Common Pleas, at the solicitation of some of the older members of the Bar whose acquaintance he had made, admitted him, as a matter of grace, to practice. Not having sufficient confidence in himself, with only four years of study, to enter into competition with members of the Bar in Buffalo, he returned to East Aurora and opened an office.



He remained there until 1830. For the first three years he experienced the usual uphill struggle that a young lawyer with neither family influence nor money has to face, a struggle made all the harder for him by the necessity of being separated from the woman he loved. Some one has said that he could not have been a very ardent lover, or he would have walked the one hundred and fifty miles at least once in those three years, to have been with the lady of his heart. At any rate they were true to each other. Both had known poverty all their lives. They were not foolishly romantic, but level-headed from stern necessity. All their virtues were solid, and after those three years they decided to join their fortunes.

They were married in February, 1826, at the residence of Abigail's brother, Judge Powers, in Moravia, New York. The new wife found Erie County as much of a wilderness as Cayuga had been when she was taken there by her mother years before, but the mutual affection of the couple was so deep and strong that they could consider no obstacle too great to be overcome. With his own hands Fillmore built the small frame house that was their first home. They started their married life with every confidence in the strength of their love to carry them forward to happiness.

Mrs. Fillmore resumed her teaching in Aurora and also performed the duties of maid-of-all-work in the small house. She rendered her husband the most efficient assistance in his struggle for political recognition. So enthusiastic and unchanging was her attachment to him that no duty was burdensome, no privation sufficient to cloud her brow. Mr. Fillmore,

thus relieved of all care and responsibility by his loving wife, began to rise rapidly in his profession. A few years later his untiring industry, rather than his brilliancy, won for him an offer of partnership from Joseph Clary, in whose office he had studied for the practice of law. So in May, 1830, four years after his marriage, he moved with his wife to Buffalo, after being elected to the Assembly.

In Buffalo Mrs. Fillmore began to enjoy society. Two children were born to them, and she found great happiness in her home, her husband's prosperity, and her children. After serving three terms in the Legislature of New York State, Mr. Fillmore was elected a Member of Congress, serving from 1833 to 1835, and again from 1837 to 1843. He retired from Congress a year later, and became the unsuccessful Whig nominee for Governor of New York. In 1847 he was elected comptroller of his State, and gave up his profession of law. When General Zachary Taylor was named for President by the Whig party, Fillmore's name was placed on the ticket as candidate for Vice-President; and sixteen months after Taylor was inaugurated as Chief Executive, Fillmore, through the old hero's death, came into the crowning glory of his life.

Despite all the practice Mrs. Fillmore had had in Buffalo society, it is recorded that she shrank from the social duties of the White House. She presided at State dinners, but pressed her daughter to the front on all other occasions. Mary Abigail Fillmore had inherited the practical, solid qualities of both her parents, and not having been born until after her father's prosperity and public life began, she had

every advantage. Her early training had been in the public schools of Buffalo. For the higher branches of learning—music, drawing, and the languages—private tutors were employed. We are told that there was no frivolity about her, and that at seventeen, her views were mature on the subject of woman's independence. She fitted herself for teaching, and was engaged in that occupation in one of the public schools of Buffalo while her father was Vice-President. It was a great comfort to Mrs. Fillmore to have this self-reliant daughter to take the lead in the social affairs of the White House.

She was a girl of eighteen, but much more fitted in every way for the duties of her high position than many older women of that time. She was conversant with French, German, and Spanish, and was a skilled performer upon both the harp and the piano. The private musical soirées were the chief delight of the family, especially of her mother. Books Miss Fillmore considered a necessity, but, to her great distress, she found none in the White House. One of the first appropriations President Fillmore asked of Congress was for the purpose of supplying this need. The appropriation was granted, and Miss Mary Abigail and her mother had the honor of selecting the first books that were bought for the White House library. They were placed in a large, pleasant room on the second floor, known as the Oval Room. Miss Mary's harp and piano were also placed there. Small musical parties, with only the members of the family present, were occasions of great frequency during the closing year of President Fillmore's term, when a painful sprain of Mrs. Fillmore's ankle often dis-

abled her, and made it necessary for her to remain quietly in a chair, or in bed.

The ankle never regained its normal strength, and less than a month after the Fillmores left the White House, Mrs. Fillmore succumbed to an illness that overtook her at the Willard Hotel, where they had gone after the inauguration of President Pierce. Mrs. Fillmore's death is recorded as deeply lamented by all who knew her intimately. It was a great shock and a heartbreaking loss to her family. And her esteemed daughter was not long in following her into that last long sleep. She returned to Buffalo with her father and presided over his home there for one year. At the end of that time she went on a short visit to the home of her grandmother, just twenty miles away. In the night she was taken with cholera, and died before her father and her brother could reach her bedside, though they had been summoned in all haste.

The only close family tie left to the ex-President, a grieving husband and a sadly stricken father, was his son. That tie was largely instrumental in pulling him back into matters of interest in the world from which his beloved had gone. Two years later he toured Europe, and twice more he was nominated for President, though he failed to secure that high office a second time. In 1858 he married a widow, Mrs. Caroline McIntosh, of Albany, who is said to have been a lady of culture and great wealth. Thereafter he sank out of the channel of politics, and lived the rest of his life in his handsome Buffalo home, amid his friends and his books.

## CHAPTER XIV

### FRANKLIN PIERCE

(1853-1857)

FRANKLIN PIERCE was the sixth child of Benjamin Pierce by his second marriage. He was a boy after his bluff, kind-hearted father's very soul, full of fun, high-spirited, fond of all outdoor sports, and a general favorite with all who knew him.

His father, at the age of seventeen, distinguished himself at Bunker Hill, and participated in other battles, until the old Continentals were disbanded. He won the rank of captain, but his reward for nine years of toil and danger is said to have been about two hundred dollars in continental currency,—all that the Government could afford to pay him. Being a full-grown man at the close of the Revolution, he decided to strike out for himself instead of returning to his uncle. A year later he was employed as agent to explore a tract of wilderness. At the same time he purchased fifty acres in the State of New Hampshire, near what is now the town of Hillsborough.

Brought up as a farmer, he decided to make that occupation his life-work. During the following spring he built a log hut, and began the clearing and cultivation of his fifty-acre tract. The soil in this part of the State was good, and there was a plentiful water supply; other settlers came, and farms sprang

up all around him. Soon a village began, and Captain Pierce became its leading citizen. Liberal and hospitable, he won wide esteem in the whole State. The people of New Hampshire made him General of militia, sent him to the Legislature, elected him sheriff of his county, and twice Governor of the State. He first married Elizabeth Andrews, who lived but one year after the wedding, and left him an infant daughter. Two years later he married Anna Kendrick, who bore him eight children.

This mention of General Benjamin Pierce is essential to the understanding of the native traits of his son, Franklin, who was born on November 23, 1804. At that time his father was the most active, public-spirited man in his community—a man of the people, but one whose natural qualities made him a leader among them. All the formative years of Franklin Pierce's life were spent under the influence of one of the best specimens of sterling New England character. His father taught him patriotism, such as was known in Revolutionary days, as early as his mother taught him religion. Thus he is seen in later life putting those two causes before every other consideration.

His father, having felt all through his life the disadvantages of a defective education, determined to give his children all the opportunities that he himself had lacked. Accordingly, Franklin was sent, at an early age, to an academy at Hancock, and afterward to one at Francestown. Nathaniel Hawthorne writes that at this age Franklin was "a beautiful boy, with sparkling blue eyes, light curling hair, and a sweet expression of face." These physical features indi-

cated moral symmetry, kindness, and delicate sentiment, rather than prominence of character. Later, his instructors testified to his propriety of conduct, and his fellow students admired his sweetness of disposition and cordial sympathy. One of his companions, who was older than he and less advanced in his studies, found it difficult to keep up with his class. Franklin is said to have spent his recess for many weeks helping this boy in his lessons. Such attributes of generous and affectionate nature remained with him through life and, combined with a natural courtesy and a graceful speech, made him a general favorite in every stratum of society.

In 1820, at the age of sixteen, he entered Bowdoin College, at Brunswick, Maine. Here, for the first two years, he was popular only with his class. We are told by the Reverend Jesse Lyman Hurlbut that the college boys formed a military company and made Franklin Pierce their captain, but that he promoted such lawless pranks with the company that he came near being sent home in disgrace. He seemed, however, to make loyal friends of all the more serious-minded students. One chum, Zenas Cadwell, a devoutly religious boy who was several years older than himself, gained such an influence over the genial Frank that he was able to draw him from his mischief and make him apply himself to his studies. From all accounts, even Cadwell had no easy task in reforming the lad. We are told that in his junior year, when Franklin discovered that he stood at the foot of his class, his first impulse was to leave college rather than to give up his diversions. Accordingly, he absented himself from all exercises

for several days, in anticipation of expulsion or suspension. Then the devoted Zenas, and others, began to argue the matter with him and finally convinced him of the error of his ways. "His mind having run wild for so long," says Mr. Hawthorne, "it could be reclaimed only by the severest effort . . . and for three months, he rose at four in the morning, toiled all day over his books, and did not retire until midnight."

It was while he was in college at Brunswick that he met and loved Jane Means Appleton, daughter of the Reverend Jesse Appleton, D. D. She was born at Hampton, New Hampshire on March 12, 1806, and her father became president of Bowdoin College when she was one year old. She had just turned fourteen when Franklin Pierce became a student, but it is hardly possible that he came to know little Jane during his first two roistering years of college life. She was too delicate, and too shy and shrinking, ever to have taken any part in the social life of Bowdoin. Their meeting must have taken place after Franklin settled to the diligent study that helped him to make up for the time he had wasted, and even to graduate as third scholar of his class.

One story indicates such a probability. Jane naturally loved books. On one April day, while reading in the college library, she was too deeply engrossed in her book to notice that clouds had obscured the sun, and that the room had suddenly become darkened. Glancing out of the window, Jane was startled to discover that a windstorm had blown up and that the skies seemed ready to burst into torrents of rain. Her first thought was that she must get home. Trem-



bling with terror, she dropped her book and rushed from the library. She had run but a short distance over the campus when a loud crash of thunder sent her reeling against an old oak, there to crouch in shivering fear, while the vivid lightning that followed the thunder played around her.

Franklin Pierce, so the story goes, was that day also reading in the library. He had seen the frightened girl dash from the building, and her look of nervous anguish had caused him to follow her. A moment after she had crouched against the oak he had caught her up in his strong arms, and was saying in his merry, reassuring voice that she had sought the most unsafe place to be found, but that she must not be alarmed, for he would take her safely home. Then, with Jane's light weight held steadily against his breast, he ran to her father's house, arriving before the deluge that ensued could overtake them.

If that story is true, their friendship and love grew out of that meeting. Many authorities state, however, that there is so little known of Miss Appleton that one cannot be sure of how or when she met Franklin Pierce. We only know that her sensitive frailty won his strongest and most lasting love.

Franklin went from college to study law in the office of Judge Woodbury, of Portsmouth. Three years later, in 1827, he was admitted to the bar and began the practice of his profession at Hillsborough. He became a good lawyer, though he failed to win his first case. He is quoted by Hawthorne as asserting, when friends tried to condole with him: "I do not need that. I will try nine hundred and ninety-nine cases, if clients will continue to trust me, and if



JANE APPLETON PIERCE  
(*Mrs. Franklin Pierce*)



I fail as I have to-day, I will try the thousandth. I shall live to argue cases in this courthouse in a manner that will mortify neither myself nor my friends."

He early became active in politics. His father was an ardent disciple of Thomas Jefferson and his party, and Franklin followed in his footsteps. He became a Democrat, and stayed with his party all his life. The town of Hillsborough gave him his first political honor by electing him its representative in the State Legislature in 1829. He served in that body for four years, being elected to Congress in 1833. One year later, he married his delicate, shrinking wife.

In every way, except in her sensitive, over-nervous organism, Jane Appleton was a most fitting wife for Franklin Pierce. Reared in an atmosphere of culture and refined Christian influence, she developed rare mental qualifications, and was fitted by natural endowment to grace any home or position. She blended with a fine mind a deep appreciation of the beautiful, and was gifted with a nice sense of harmony in surroundings. On the other hand, she preferred the quiet of her New England home to the glare and glitter of any fashionable society, and she rarely participated in gay amusements. Since her health was never very good while she was away from New England, she remained in Washington no longer than was necessary, during her husband's term in Congress.

In 1838 Mr. Pierce moved from Hillsborough to Concord. Four years later, rather than be separated from his family so much of the time, he resigned from the Senate. Three sons had been born to the

Pierces. One had died in infancy. Another had been claimed by death at the age of four. This was a deep grief to both parents, and Mrs. Pierce needed her husband's companionship more than ever.

Mr. Pierce returned to the full practice of his profession, the tenor of his legal life having been hitherto broken by his months of public service. To the reputation he had gained as a lawyer he now added a brilliancy of achievement which brought him into greater prominence and into closer relationship with the people of New Hampshire than ever before. He understood men and their passions, and he knew the way to their hearts. In 1846 he declined President Polk's offer of the position of Attorney-General. He stated, at this time, that he resigned from the Senate with the fixed purpose of never again being separated from his family for any considerable length of time, except at the call of his country in time of war—a call that was soon to come.

This decision secured Mrs. Pierce's tranquil happiness for one year more. Then came the declaration of war with Mexico. Her husband, ready to serve the best interests of his Government, enlisted as a private soldier in a company raised in Concord, and went through the regular drills with his fellow soldiers. But he was soon made colonel of the Ninth Regiment, which was New England's quota of the ten that were to be raised; and before he reached Mexico, he was made brigadier general.

Mrs. Pierce's health during the time he remained in Mexico was not more frail than usual, but the anxiety and suspense caused by the absence of her beloved one kept her from improving her impaired

constitution. She and the one son left to her remained in her home in Concord, awaiting the gallant husband and father.

Franklin Pierce distinguished himself in war as he distinguished himself in whatever he undertook to do. He rode under the burning Mexican sun in such gay good humor that he soon became the idol of his men. No danger daunted him, no difficulties ruffled him. Once, when his army was upon the Mexicans' heels, they came to a bridge built by the old Spaniards, and found the center arch had been blown up. All were dismayed but General Pierce, for he felt that there was some way out of the situation. He summoned to his aid a skilled Maine lumberman, and ways and means of surmounting the obstacle were discussed. The lumberman, a master of mechanical contrivances, assured General Pierce that in four hours he could build a road over the bridge for the artillery and wagons, if he were given men enough to help him. Five hundred was the number of workmen he wanted, and that number was at once detailed to do the work. Before night the passage was made, and the Mexicans learned something of the versatility of talent among the Americans.

On his march to General Scott's headquarters, Pierce's horse slipped among some rocks and fell, breaking a leg and crushing his rider under him. A mounted orderly galloped to his assistance, and the General was removed, stunned and almost insensible from severe bruises and a badly sprained knee. Dr. Ritchie of Virginia, who was attached to Pierce's brigade, ministered to him. As soon as Pierce had recovered full consciousness, he insisted on rejoining

his troops. "But, General, you cannot keep your seat," remonstrated the surgeon. "Then tie me on," was his undaunted reply; and in the agony of a fresh sprain, he rode away as soon as his orderly could obtain a fresh horse for him.

He took his place at the front, where bullets were thickest. His nerve and will carried him through, and he took no rest until midnight. Then, upon an ammunition wagon, in a drenching, tropical rain, he discovered that pain could overcome weariness. None of the miserable hours of that night were shortened by sleep; yet, before dawn the next morning, when orders came from General Scott for an immediate advance, he commanded that he be again lifted to his saddle. The assault was successful in seventeen minutes, but the pursuit of the Mexicans lasted until afternoon. It was led by General Pierce. General Scott had intended to give him personal orders to attack Santa Anna in the rear; but when he saw Pierce's condition, he changed his mind, though Pierce begged as a boon to be permitted to go. "Why, man, you can't touch your foot to the stirrup," said General Scott. "One I can," came the answer from Pierce, with a flash of his blue eyes that always proclaimed his spirit equal to the occasion.

He was allowed to go. Over ditches and chasms he leaped his horse, until he came to one too wide for the attempt. Then his orderly was called to help him down, and, crawling on his hands and on the knee that was not sprained, he reached the opposite side. He continued until human endurance could stand no more. Then he sank helpless upon the field of battle. His men wanted to bear him away, but he

would not have it; he insisted on staying where he could watch the fight. At the shouts of victory from his men he was placed on his horse and rode to meet Santa Anna, who had requested a conference with him. So ended his military career. General Pierce took part in no more conflicts. He was ill in bed when Mexico fell into the hands of the Americans; and nine months from the time he had said farewell to his family, he was back at his home in Concord.

It had been nine months crowded with adventure. He had seen more actual service in that time than do many professional soldiers during an entire lifetime. Hawthorne says that all the dreams of his youth had been realized; to his military ardor, an hereditary root in his breast, full sway had been given, and he was satisfied. As soon as the treaty of peace was signed he gave up his commission and returned to the practice of law. He flattered himself that no circumstance could ever occur to draw him again from the retirement of his domestic peace.

New Hampshire welcomed him back with pride. He had received a splendid sword from his many friends when he went to war, and the State gave him another on his return. Then, in 1852, he was nominated for President by the Democrats, and the country honored him by a large vote.

Mrs. Pierce was highly sensible of the honor conferred upon her husband, and no less appreciative of the prestige it would bestow upon her son; but inwardly her shrinking nature suffered torture. She put forth her most valiant efforts, and her home for the first time in her life became gay with visitors. She smiled upon them all, and when she left her



home with the President-elect and her son, the public curiosity which had always been so painful to her was endured without visible tremor.

Two months previous to the inauguration of Mr. Pierce as President, an accident occurred on the Boston and Maine Railroad which resulted in a great calamity for him and his wife. They had been to Boston with their son, a handsome lad of thirteen. On their return to Concord, between Andover and Lawrence, an axle broke, and in another moment the cars were hurtling down an embankment. General Pierce was bruised and badly shaken up, but the thought of his loved ones rapidly cleared his brain. His wife, who had been sitting in the seat beside him, was near by, stunned to unconsciousness. He took her in his arms to a place of safety, then returned to look for his boy. He was soon found, his head crushed and pinned under a beam, his young body still in death. Even in that awful moment, the thought of what this would be to the mother of his child was Pierce's first consideration. None must tell her except himself. The subject is too painful to dwell upon; every heart in the nation ached in sympathy for the grief-stricken parents, suddenly bereft of their last child. Curiously, no other passengers were seriously injured, and all that human aid could do was done for the Pierces.

Under the shadow of this bereavement, in feeble health and exhausted vitality, Mrs. Pierce came to the White House. Always fortified by a strong Christian faith, which was supported and shared by her husband, Mrs. Pierce attained through sorrow the perfection of many of her most ennobling traits

of character. Under her lasting infirmity, the effort she made to hide her private grief and to sustain the dignity of her husband's position was nothing short of superhuman. That she performed her task nobly and with unsurpassed grace and dignity, those who had the privilege of seeing her in the White House have testified.

The sad event which happened so short a time before Mrs. Pierce came to Washington was enough to have shattered a much hardier constitution. The arduous duties of presiding for tedious hours at State dinners, and of standing through fatiguing receptions, wore her to a mere shadow, but she was seldom absent from these occasions. She left only the most agreeable memories behind her when the President's term was over.

In the autumn of 1857 Mr. Pierce took his wife to Madeira for a six months' sojourn. There she rallied sufficiently to continue to travel for eighteen months in the principal countries of Europe. But on her return to the lonely home in Concord she began to droop. She was haunted by those childish voices that were forever stilled, until consumption took her to the world to which they had gone.

Franklin Pierce moved on in his life's journey alone. His had been a happy, harmonious marriage, crowned by a wealth of tender affection and matchless love. He resumed the practice of law, and retained to the end of his life, five years later, the social popularity he had always known,—ever a genial host, a generous neighbor, and a kind friend.

## CHAPTER XV.

### JAMES BUCHANAN

(1857-1861)

JAMES BUCHANAN was the first President to enter the White House a bachelor, and the only one to depart still unmarried. The sun of love had risen and set for him long before the people of Pennsylvania ever dreamed that the boy of Old Cove Mountain would ever reflect any honor upon his native State. His is a romance almost reaching into melodrama, yet preserved from every taint of the sensational by a high dignity and a lifelong devotion.

That one may understand the everlasting sorrow of this eminent man, caused by a broken love match, it is necessary to glance at the background against which he was nurtured. He was his father's second child, born at the foot of North Mountain, Cumberland County (now Franklin County), on April 23, 1791. Franklin County, Pennsylvania, borders on Maryland. Here the great Alleghenies and the lesser Blue Ridge mountains meet, the Alleghenies rising in steep, broken peaks in the west, while the Blue Ridge forms a boundary on the east. Old Cove Mountain lifts its head 1,500 feet to the northwest near this point. In a wild gorge, cut through by a singing brook, stood the log cabin in which Buchanan first saw the light of day.

“Stony Batter” was the hard, merciless name the location was known by in those days. There James Buchanan, father of the President, became an assistant in the store of a Mr. John Tom. Buchanan had been a native of Donegal, Ireland. He was of a respectable family of farmers, and had emigrated to the United States in 1783, when in his twenty-second year. Five years later, this young man bought out the business of Mr. Tom, and built a log cabin for the American girl who had promised to become his bride. It was a crude little house, but it pleased Elizabeth Speer, whose soul had its roots in the blue mist that her parents had loved in Scotland, just as her husband’s was tinged by the green of the Emerald Isle. This bit of nature, hemmed in by mountains, had its mist, its dew, and its wild ruggedness, all blending in blues and greens that forever satisfied their beauty-loving spirits. Nor was this all. The Gap was a very advantageous spot for store-keeping, as the people from the western counties came there with packhorses loaded with wheat, to trade for groceries and other family supplies. James Buchanan’s circumstances soon improved.

He and his wife were both Presbyterians of Scotch-Irish parentage. James Buchanan’s grandfather belonged to the branch of Buchanans that had emigrated from Scotland to Ireland. Elizabeth Speer’s father had emigrated from Scotland to America. He and his wife, Mary Patterson, had settled first on a farm ten miles from Lancaster, and afterward at the foot of South Mountain, between Chambersburg and Gettysburg. Buchanan says of his mother, in a short autobiography, that consider-

ing her limited opportunities she was a remarkable woman. Though she was the daughter of a farmer, and engaged in household tasks from her earliest youth, she found much time to read, and she reflected upon what she read. "For her sons," he states, "as they successively grew up, she was a delightful companion. She argued with them and would often gain the victory, ridiculed them for their eccentricities, and excited their ambitions. My father was a man of practical judgment and great industry and perseverance. He had a good English education, and that kind of knowledge of mankind which prevented him from ever being deceived in business."

It is said that tender little traditions still hover around the old home site of James Buchanan's mother, and they are often repeated by the mountain people. One described her second child, James, as having been a veritable boy of nature, loving to roam the mountain sides for birds' nests and rare wild flowers, or for whatever he could find of interest among the rocky peaks. His mother, not wanting to restrain this inclination in him, conceived the idea of tying a small cowbell about his neck so that she might know from its tinkle where he was. If one listens at the dead of night, say the mountain people when telling this legend, the echoing tinkle of the belled boy's wandering can still be heard among the rocks.

When James Buchanan was five years old, his father moved from Cove's Gap to Mercersburg, where his son's education began. Mr. Buchanan wrote that he received a "tolerably" good education in English, and that he studied the Latin and Greek

languages at a school taught by Reverend James R. Sharon and afterward by a Mr. McConnell and Dr. Jesse Magaw. In his sixteenth year he was sent to Dickinson College, at Carlisle, where he entered the junior class. "This college was in a wretched condition," he wrote, "and I've often regretted that I had not been sent to some other institution. There was no efficient discipline, and the students did pretty much as they pleased. To be a sober, industrious youth was to incur ridicule of the mass. Without much tendency to become dissipated I engaged in every sort of extravagance and mischief in which the greater proficient of the college indulged. Unlike the rest of the class, however, I was a tolerably hard student, and I was never deficient in my college exercises."

His "college exercises" did not save him in the eyes of the authorities, however. After one year, while he was at home on his summer vacation, his father received a letter from the principal of Dickinson, stating that but for the respect the faculty entertained for him, young James would have been expelled from college for disorderly conduct. They were writing to say they could not take him back. His father read the letter, Buchanan says, and handed it to him without a word. Then he left the room, and his son could not recollect that he ever afterward spoke to him on the subject. Mortified to the soul, James Buchanan at once determined upon his course. He went to the pastor of his father's church, a trustee of the college, and made full confession of his misbehavior, telling him how it had hurt him to have his father receive such a letter.

Dr. King, the good pastor, then gave him a gentle lecture, which was all the more effective because it was gentle. He promised to intercede with the college authorities and to seek permission for his return, if he would pledge on his honor to conduct himself better in the future. This James Buchanan cheerfully did, and thereafter kept his pledge, setting his heart upon obtaining high honors. At the public examination previous to the commencement, he answered without difficulty all the questions, and was named for one of the honors conferred by the college. Yet again he was doomed to suffer mortification; for both honors went to other young men, because of his early disrespect for the rules of the institution and for its professors.

In December, after his graduation from Dickinson College, he went to Lancaster and entered the office of Mr. Hopkins as a law student. Four years later, at the age of twenty-one, he was admitted to the bar. This was at the beginning of the War of 1812. The capture of Washington, in 1814, lighted a flame of patriotism that pervaded the whole of Pennsylvania. A public meeting was called in Lancaster for the purpose of obtaining volunteers, and on that occasion Buchanan made his first public speech. He was also among the first to volunteer for service. A company was immediately formed, and Judge Henry Shippen was chosen captain. They marched to Baltimore, and served under the command of Major Charles Sterret Ridgely, until they were honorably discharged. In October of that same year, James Buchanan was elected to the Legislature, as a representative from Lancaster. After two sessions in the

Legislature, he decided to apply himself exclusively to the practice of his profession.

With an honorable and distinguished professional career before him, he was a favorite in society both for his talents and for his character. Thus it seemed that happiness had been especially provided for him by his own merits and a kind Providence. But there now occurred the episode which was to shadow his days to the end of his life.

He was a great admirer and connoisseur of beautiful women, it is said; and he gave evidence of his taste when he became engaged to the loveliest and wealthiest girl in Lancaster. Her father, Robert Coleman, entirely approved; his Anne did not have to consider money, and James Buchanan had everything else. They were completely happy and were considered the best-matched couple in the State. They were complements of each other, for Miss Coleman was very retiring and sensitive, while Mr. Buchanan was high-spirited and full of energy, the best type of young blood of that day.

Buchanan's law business took him away from Lancaster quite frequently. After one such trip, which delayed him much longer than usual, he did not visit his fiancée as quickly as she thought he should have. To that he added the provoking error of calling at the home of a married friend, who had a charming young girl visitor. This, in itself no heinous offense, might also have been explained satisfactorily had Mr. Buchanan been given an opportunity by his betrothed; but some gossipy busybody was too eager to inform the rich, beautiful Miss Coleman of her lover's faithlessness. Not waiting to



hear an explanation from him, Miss Coleman angrily broke the engagement by writing him a note. This she sent to Mr. Buchanan while he was engaged in a busy, crowded court-room. It is said that all who saw him read the note observed how his face blanched.

Had the young lady been in the same financial circumstances as himself, he could have brooked her anger and sued again for her favor. But besides belonging to one of the wealthiest families in the country, she was very rich in her own right; and she had charged him with coldness and indifference. His pride would not permit him to give her the slightest opportunity of thinking him sordid, or of suspecting him of ulterior motives.

So the two strong-headed young people let pride strengthen the barrier between them, and time was not allowed to work its magic. Shortly after the engagement was broken, Miss Coleman went with some young friends, under a chaperon, to attend an opera at Philadelphia. At the hotel, while they were dressing for the evening's entertainment, she complained of not feeling well, and persuaded the others to go to the opera without her. On their return they flocked to her room to ask if she were better, and to tell her of the rare musical treat she had missed. To their dismay and horror, they found her dead.

Great excitement followed. There was whispered talk for months, but her family always remained reticent. No one ever really learned whether or not the unhappy girl had caused her own death. The following letter, published in Mr. Buchanan's *Life and Letters*, tells its own sad story.

(James Buchanan to Robert Coleman, Esq.)

*"Lancaster, December 10, 1819.*

"DEAR SIR:

"You have lost a child, a dear, dear child. I have lost the only earthly object of my affection, without whom life now presents to me a dreary blank. My prospects are all cut off, and I feel that my happiness will be buried with her in the grave. It is now no time for explanation, but the time will come when you will discover that she, as well as I, have been much abused. God forgive the authors of it. My feelings of resentment against them, whoever they may be, are buried in the dust. I have now one request to make, and, for the love of God and of your dear, departed daughter whom I loved infinitely more than any other human being could love, deny me not. Afford me the melancholy pleasure of seeing her body before interment. I would not for the world be denied this request.

"I would make another, but, for the misrepresentations which must have been made to you, I am afraid. I would like to follow her remains to the grave as a mourner. I would convince the world, and hope yet to convince you, that she was infinitely dearer to me than life. I may sustain the shock of her death, but I feel that happiness has fled from me forever. The prayer which I make to God without ceasing is, that I yet may be able to show my veneration for the memory of my dear departed saint, by my respect and attachment for her surviving friends.

"May heaven bless you, and enable you to bear the shock of this death with the fortitude of a Christian.

"I am, forever, your sincere and grateful friend,  
"JAMES BUCHANAN."

This letter was returned to Mr. Buchanan by Miss Coleman's father, unopened; and another letter

in the same volume with this one, written on the 20th of the month by a Mr. Ellmaker to Mr. Buchanan, shows that the grief-stricken young man had left Lancaster. Mr. Ellmaker speaks of assisting with his cases, and sympathetically tried to persuade him to return to his work. After a short time, Mr. Buchanan followed his friend's advice with a supreme effort; but the love for this overwrought, sensitive girl remained unbroken through his long and varied life. It became for him a grief of which he could never speak, except by the most distant and vague allusion; a sacred, unceasing sorrow, of which he was always painfully conscious, but which he kept hidden beneath a manner said to be most engaging and chivalrous in its deference to women of all ages.

Soon after this catastrophe, he was offered the nomination for a seat in Congress. Mr. George Ticknor Curtis, in his biography of Mr. Buchanan, says that the candidate did not suppose he could be elected and did not much desire to be; but he was strongly urged to accept the candidacy, and consented, chiefly because he needed an innocent excitement that would in some measure remove him from his grief. The world knows of the uninterrupted political and social success that followed.

Fortunately for Buchanan, his home was not desolate, for a sister's child, left an orphan at an early age, elected to fill a daughter's place in his life. Little Harriet Lane was the child of his favorite sister. She was but seven years old when her father died, just two years after the death of her mother. She had a host of relatives, and many doors stood open to bid her welcome; but being an irrepressible

child, she was allowed to make her own choice. "Little Pitchers," having heard the sad love story of Uncle James, whose handsome face and remarkable appearance had taken her fancy, decided that she would like to live with him.

The lonely bachelor was thoroughly pleased that the small girl had made his home her choice; and, although he had never been given to petting and caring for children, he welcomed this one most heartily. The romping, mischievous child, careless of proprieties, brought fresh life and a flood of sunshine into his gloomy days. Like all healthy, spirited children, she gave frequent cause for rebuke, and often he would threaten to place her with two maiden ladies of their acquaintance, who entertained the most rigid ideas of correct deportment for young girls. And, for one year, during his term in Congress, he carried out his threat. Yet, if they subdued her while she remained with them, she returned to her uncle as boisterous and as troublesome as ever. Still, it is said that when she was the most trying, he would proudly proclaim, "She has a soul above deceit or fraud. She never told a lie; she is too proud for it."

At the age of twelve, Harriet Lane was sent with an elder sister to a school in Charlestown, Virginia (now West Virginia); but she spent her vacations with Mr. Buchanan. Later she attended a convent school in Georgetown, much celebrated for turning out accomplished women. Carefully educated, she grew up to be beautiful and cultured, with the polished manners and high-bred air of a fascinating woman of the world. She became her uncle's con-

stant companion, and went with him when he took up his diplomatic post abroad. Later she was mistress of the White House during his administration as President, and her charming tact and winsome manner to all her uncle's guests rendered her régime as the nation's hostess one of much brilliancy.

The letters written by Mr. Buchanan to this niece, after her marriage to Henry Ellicott Johnson of Baltimore, are preserved in the Library of Congress. The two monuments which she erected to his memory testify to her undying devotion to him. One, a bronze statue on a white marble base, was unveiled at Meridian Park, Washington, D. C., in 1830. The other is a pyramid of rocks, taken from the mountain sides, that slopes like a mammoth amphitheater around the spot where once stood the humble cabin in which he was born.

## CHAPTER XVI

### ABRAHAM LINCOLN

(1861-1865)

LINCOLN was the first President born beyond the boundaries of the thirteen original States, and the first to have no colonial ancestry. His father had been a wandering laborer, who had been taught by Nancy Hanks, the girl he married, to write his name and to spell his way through the Bible. She had been a poor orphan like himself, but she had been brought up by some relatives who gave her a little schooling. Abraham, the only son of this couple, was as poorly equipped by education as his parents had been. He did not attend school a whole year in his life. He was his own teacher and acquired some useful knowledge from every circumstance and from every person with whom he came in contact.

It was on February 12, 1809, that Lincoln started life, three miles south of the present site of Hodgenville, in what is now Larue County, Kentucky. He did not live in Hodgenville long enough to remember it, and it is said that he stumbled over the spelling of the name after his nomination for President. This verbal stumbling-block came from a family named Hodgens, who lived in that part of Hardin County which became Larue, and whose mill gave a name to the place which Lincoln's birth made famous.

He was born on what was called Rock Spring Farm. This is said to have been the first piece of land his father ever owned, though one writer states that that "is not saying how much he owned it," as the elder Lincoln's land always reverted to its former owner when the family moved. Before Abraham was four years old, the family moved to Knob Creek Valley.

This home was only a trifle better than the cabin in which he had been born; and there was worse still to come in the future home in Indiana. Mr. Hern-don, who was Abraham Lincoln's law partner at the time he was nominated for President, says that Lincoln's father was a roving, shiftless man, always on the lookout for something better, but lacking the energy to improve his condition when he found the opportunity. Whether true or not, it is certain that the family pulled up stakes and followed him to a new country after a few years at Knob Creek; and for a year, little Abe Lincoln's home in the Indiana forest was not even the poorest sort of log cabin. It was just a hunting camp, made of four fork-tipped uprights at the corners, with poles or trunks of young trees laid upon them for the frame. Against these, other poles and brush were leaned, and a roof of boughs and slabs of bark was supposed to shed the rain. The earth was pounded hard to make a floor, and a chimney of tempered clay and a fireplace answered for warmth and cooking.

Mr. Stoddard, in his biography of Lincoln, says that there are many patterns of "pole-shelters" but that Tom Lincoln was not a man to waste upon his own any labor not absolutely demanded by stern

necessity. Thus, when wind and rain were provided against, the work of clearing land around the shelter for the raising of corn and potatoes was begun. Little Abraham's legs grew longer and longer, while the silence and the awe of the great forest settled upon his heart and mind, teaching him lessons too deep for youth fully to understand.

Indiana soon became a State, and others came to settle there. Among the first were some relatives of the Lincolns. A new log house was built by Tom, and the half-faced camp was given up to Mrs. Betsy and Thomas Sparrow. They were the aunt and uncle of Thomas Lincoln's wife, who had cared for her in her childhood. With them was an orphaned nephew, Dennis Hanks. The heat of the next summer brought the scourge known as "the milk-sick," and Betsy and Thomas Sparrow died. Dennis Hanks moved over to the log house to live with the Lincolns, and every night he and Abe would climb to the loft by means of pegs driven into the logs of the house, to sleep on sacks of corn shucks.

Not many weeks later, Nancy Lincoln was ill with the same disease that had taken off both her aunt and her uncle. The next year was a miserable time for the little pioneer children in this wretched backwoods home, for Nancy Lincoln died. Without training, and with but few of the necessities of life, Abraham Lincoln, his sister Sally, and little Dennis Hanks had to get along the best way they could. The house grew dirtier and more desolate as the days went by, and the children became neglected, unwashed, half-naked little savages. Tom Lincoln finally awoke to the consciousness that something



must be done, and in the fall of another year he went back to Kentucky to get himself a wife.

He was luckier than his shiftlessness deserved, for Mrs. Sally Johnston, the new Mrs. Lincoln, was a woman of respectable family. She must have expected to find something better than the appalling squalor to which her husband brought her, but the mute appeal of the misery she found went to her kind heart. The ragged, ten-year-old boy with his shy, sad face, standing in the snow on bare, frost-cracked feet, trying to smile at her from under his mop of tangled hair, was a picture she often told of later. His sister and Dennis Hanks were equally destitute. "Poor things!" she exclaimed. "I'll make 'em look a little more like human beings." And she did, out of clothes she had brought for her own three children.

From that moment, life became more promising for Abraham Lincoln. His stepmother was a stirring, energetic woman, and Tom Lincoln's days of idleness were over. The children were sent to the school on Little Pigeon Creek whenever they could be spared from the work of the farm. But as Tom Lincoln grew older, his tendency to shift the drudgeries of the farm upon Abraham, John Johnston, and Dennis Hanks grew stronger. Soon Abe began to manifest a strong preference for working upon any piece of ground other than the Lincoln farm. He chose to hire himself out, even if his father did get most of his wages. His services were always in demand, as he could chop more wood, handle more hay, husk more corn, and lift heavier weights than any other young man in the neighbor-

hood. Then, too, he was perpetually good-humored and obliging, and a favorite with all the children and their mothers, who liked to have him around the house. He was ready, after the field work was over, to tend the baby, or to go to the spring for a bucket of water. So the tall, rawboned stripling went from farm to farm as a hired laborer, little thinking how thorough a knowledge he was by that means obtaining of the different classes of people who were filling up the great West.

He could not appreciate, at that time, the school through which he was passing, but every step of his future life proved that not one of those hard lessons-by-the-way, so useless to many another man, had been wasted on him. There was no miracle at all in his intimate knowledge of the thoughts and ways and feelings of the common people. Not only had Abraham Lincoln unconsciously studied the people among whom he came and went; he had borrowed and studied, as well, every book that they possessed, from Weems's *Life of George Washington*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and *Pilgrim's Progress*, to every scrap of poetry and telling jingle that he could find. He also stored in a scrapbook every passage that had made an impression upon him. Then he began to seek drier and more difficult studies. He encountered David Turnham, who had been made acting constable, and who owned a copy of the "Revised Statutes of Indiana." The book was not to be borrowed, but Turnham permitted Abe to come to his home and read it.

At nineteen he was a young giant in strength and stature, standing six feet, four inches, barefooted.

A boy-of-all-work, he familiarized himself, as he went from job to job, with the habits, prejudices, superstitions, religious beliefs, and political ideas of the new and growing country, where people were struggling to become intelligent members of a self-governing community. His thoughts and dreams, however, were bearing him away from his day's work. He began to stand apart from the crowd among whom he toiled.

Just before he was twenty-one, he went with his father to the newer frontier of Illinois. There he helped him build another log house, clear some more farming ground, and split the rails to fence it in. Then, his twenty-first birthday reached, with an ax over his shoulder and what few clothes he owned tied up in a bandana, he started out to make his own way in the world. By splitting rails, working on flatboats, surveying, storekeeping, and doing any other chores that came to hand, he made his way to the little hamlet of New Salem on the Sagamore River. There, for a time, he was postmaster; and there, it is said, he fished out of a barrel of odds and ends a copy of Blackstone's "Commentaries." Over its dirty pages he pored day after day, sprawled on the ground outside his neglected store, with his bare feet propped high against the trunk of a shade tree. When that volume was finished, he began to borrow other law books from a lawyer in Springfield; and people remembered for many years afterward the tall, barefoot student intently reading as he walked the twenty miles of dusty road between New Salem and Springfield.

The ambition of Abraham Lincoln to make a man

of himself had never needed any spurring, as there were within him springs of life of which even he was as yet ignorant. But now he was approaching an experience in which he was to discover a new and strong incentive, a power outstripping all other forces he had ever known, for urging him on and upward. There was in New Salem a young and beautiful girl, the third child of Mr. James Rutledge, a tavern keeper. She came to know and to admire Abraham Lincoln, who boarded, when he first went to New Salem, with the Reverend John M. Cameron, a nephew of Mr. Rutledge. There were eleven daughters in the Cameron family. James Rutledge had nine children, so the two families furnished a small crowd of young people for the little hamlet. Ann, the third Rutledge child, was easily the belle of the group, for her heritage had endowed her with every possible grace and charm. Like Lincoln, she had been born in Kentucky. She was nineteen years old when he arrived in New Salem, and was at that time betrothed to a young man who had come to the hamlet a year before, John McNeil, whose real name turned out to be McNamar.

He was a thriving young trader and farmer, who, for the three years he posed as McNeil, accumulated nearly all the property in New Salem. Then, suddenly, he revealed to his sweetheart that he had been concealing his identity and that his name was McNamar. He had hidden that fact when he came West, he told her, that he might build a fortune unknown to his family in New York. He also told her that he had decided that, before marrying, he would close up his business, turn his property into

money, and go back to New York to get his aged father.

Ann Rutledge believed this story of her betrothed. After his departure there came a long and dreary time of waiting for letters. At last one came, telling her that his father had sickened and died; then a few others arrived at longer intervals, always bringing his promise to return, and holding her to her promise to marry him. Finally, the letters ceased coming altogether. The strain of watching and waiting for the young man's return began to tell on the frail girl's health, especially as she was too true in her sense of honor to the false lover to accept the comfort of the beautiful affection that Abraham Lincoln was offering her. She refused, in her too sensitive good faith, to be set free from her promise to McNamar without his formal word of release. Although she no longer loved the man who had broken his word to her, she was slow to admit her right to take another in his place.

Lincoln knew, however, that she had so taken him, and he gave her all the strength of his unmeasured love. No other thing of which he had shown himself capable was half so important for his inner growth as was this love for Ann Rutledge. For the first time, he had something for which to live and to work, besides a mere existence. It was a dream more beautiful than any his wild fancy had been able to imagine. Under its influence he worked as he never worked before, toiling day and night at the law books he borrowed in Springfield, sometimes mastering forty pages on his walk from Springfield back to New Salem. Before he could become a lawyer, the

people elected him to the Legislature. This was like a university, to this unschooled man. He could rise now to a height where Ann, his beloved, would be proud to stand beside him.

It was a glorious summer for Abraham Lincoln—the brightest, sweetest, most hopeful summer he was ever to know; for even as the golden days came and went, they brought an increasing shadow. Little by little came the knowledge that the health of Ann Rutledge had suffered more than any one had thought, under the strain to which she had been subjected by her false lover. Her sensitive nature was strung to too high a tension; and torn between the love to which she had felt bound and the love of Abraham Lincoln, which she desired to accept and return, she fell an easy victim to a fever that was to prove fatal.

A few days before her death, she sent a message to Lincoln that took him in haste to her bedside. There they were left alone together. What passed between them in that last, sad farewell no one has ever known. It is said that Lincoln left the house with inexpressible agony written on his face. Up to that hour he had been a man of marvelous poise and self-control, but the pain he then struggled with grew deeper and deeper, until, when they told him Ann was dead, his heart and will and brain gave way. For a time he seemed to lose the sense of his own identity; all New Salem said that he was insane. He piteously moaned and raved that he could not bear to have the snows, rains, and storms beat upon her grave. One good friend finally managed to entice him to his home at a distance from the vil-

lage, where he kept watch over him until the fury of his grief wore itself away. His studies and his work were the first things to which he returned. In time the joke and the laugh began to come again to his lips, but it is said that they were henceforth to have the character of a brief sunlight breaking through a cloud. Lincoln was never to be the same light-hearted man that he was before he loved Ann Rutledge.

When Lincoln returned to work and to the excitement of politics, he also returned to the society of women. He was, at that time, engaged in his campaign for reelection, and since he was supported by both Whigs and Democrats, he was regarded as sufficiently established in his career to justify popular interest in his domestic affairs. None of the women of New Salem regarded his sorrow over the death of his sweetheart as likely to last forever; and with great promptness, and not wholly without his knowledge, they set about finding him a wife. Ann Rutledge had died in August of 1835. The following summer, Mrs. Bennett Abell of New Salem told Abraham Lincoln that she was going on a visit to her old home in Kentucky, and that she would bring back her sister, Mary Owens, for him to marry.

Mary had spent a month in New Salem two years before, and Lincoln remembered her as a large, handsome woman. He is quoted, in a biography of him written by William E. Barton, as having told Mrs. Abell to bring Mary back and he would marry her. "This, of course, was understood to be a joke," says Mr. Barton, "but it was not entirely a joke." Lincoln was twenty-seven years old at that time, and

a member of the Legislature. Mary Owens was a few months older, and she knew it was time she had a husband. She did return to New Salem, and from letters lent to Mr. Herndon and published in his biography of Lincoln, we have documentary proof that this event led to a second love affair in the life of Lincoln. Mr. William O. Stoddard says that the explanation is very simple. Mary Owens was attractive and well educated, and had enough good sense to admire a strong, rising young man. Lincoln was restless and heart-hungry; so the intimacy grew into a struggling imitation of a courtship and an engagement. There was, however, no real feeling aroused on either side, worthy to be spoken of as love; and both were finally glad to be released from the engagement.

During this period, Lincoln, under every disadvantage, steadily pursued the study of law, and early in the year 1837 he was admitted to practice. He could not hope to build up a business at New Salem, so he moved to Springfield. There, shortly afterward, he formed a partnership with John P. Stuart, the friend from whom he had borrowed law books. It was almost a matter of course that he was elected again to the Legislature the following year; and when that body came together he was the candidate of the Whig party for Speaker of the House. In the midst of this political excitement he was now approaching another crisis in his emotional career.

Among the friends he made in Springfield were Mr. Ninian Edwards and his wife. Mrs. Edwards was a daughter of the Honorable Robert S. Todd of Lexington, Kentucky. She, too, had a sister Mary, a



beautiful, witty girl, who came to make her home with them about this time. Lincoln was now constantly being thrown into the society of well educated people, and he found himself frequently among the fascinating young ladies of the capital. Soon friends began to suggest that he would do well to marry Mary Todd. The advice fell on prepared ground. He deeply felt his loneliness, and the idea of having a home held more charm for him than it did for most men. Miss Todd, though from a family that aspired to high social position, had a keen perception of the ability and worth of the rising young lawyer. That he was poor, and fettered by many disadvantages of person, manners, education, and family history did not blind her to the fact that he was a man worthy of any woman's strong affection. She speedily settled herself in his favor with a firmness which was afterward proof against all trials. It was not long before there was a formal betrothal between the two.

Lincoln was by no means Mary Todd's only suitor, as she could have had her pick among the most promising young men of Springfield. She was asked which of her admirers she preferred, and her laughing reply was, "the one who has the best chance of being President." It is amusing to read how many persons, from that merry remark, believed that the lively Kentucky girl exercised the gift of prophecy.

This engagement might have drifted happily on to fulfillment, says Mr. Stoddard, if there had not arrived in Springfield another member of the Edwards family. This was Miss Matilda Edwards, a sister of

Ninian Edwards, and she quickly became a reigning belle. Lincoln saw much of her, and it was soon rumored that when he looked upon Matilda's lovely face he began to doubt his love for Mary Todd. Then followed a period when he could not trust himself to decide whether he was really in love with either woman. The brain that had once been swept into temporary ruin by a hurricane of passionate sorrow was once again facing a blackness of despair in a storm of doubt. It is said that he went to Miss Todd and offered to release her from the engagement, telling her that he had discovered that all his heart and love lay buried in the grave of Ann Rutledge. But the engagement did not end. Lincoln's sense of honor would not permit it, when he had been convinced by Mary Todd that he had won her lasting love. Once more a friend took charge of him while the gloomy time lasted. He was positively demented, say many writers, unfit for marriage, for society, or for business. Mr. J. F. Speed, the friend who cared for him at this time, was a merchant in Springfield, and that January he closed out his business to move to a new home in Kentucky, taking Lincoln with him.

There are many and varied accounts of this crisis in Lincoln's life. Herndon says that the preparation for his wedding to Mary Todd had gone forward up to the moment for the ceremony, and that the guests and supper waited, but that no groom appeared. Others contest that statement, and assert that he was not absent a single day from the Legislature during that January session, nor did he leave Springfield to go with Speed or any other person to Kentucky that

year. All biographers of Lincoln agree, however, that he did absent himself from Miss Todd's company during all that spring and summer. But whatever the cause, the two made up their minds that it could be forgiven; or else Lincoln determined to take no more chances with his black moods, for when they met at a friend's home in the autumn, he and Miss Todd were married so hastily that Mary had to borrow her sister's dress for a wedding gown.

The marriage took place on November 4, 1842. They went to board at the Globe Tavern, where Lincoln paid four dollars a week for their room and meals. From that time forth his mind recovered health and tone, and its calm strength was never again lost. He continued as diligent a student of men and books as ever, and his professional reputation grew. Four sons were born to him, and soon he became the life and soul of political movements and party organization. There was no danger that his ambition would ever be permitted to slumber; his wife fully believed in his capacity for almost any earthly achievement, and she was ever at his elbow, encouraging and helping him by her superior educational advantages. That he justified her faith, and that her interest was the one of most importance to him was manifested when he received the news of his nomination for President.

"There is a little woman over on Eighth Street that will be glad to hear this news; if you will excuse me, I'll go tell her," he said to the friends who were waiting with him at his shabby law office. If he had loved madly before he ever saw Mary Todd, his years with her must have known a large measure of com-



MARY TODD LINCOLN  
(*Mrs. Abraham Lincoln*)



fortable happiness; for in Springfield, no smallest whisper of their domestic infelicity was ever heard.

The country had had Presidents of humble birth before Lincoln, but, as Mr. James Morgan says, none had ever moved so humbly in high places. "No honor, no power could exalt him above his native simplicity." Truly he was a common man who could "talk with Kings—nor lose the common touch." And Mary Todd Lincoln walked with him even to the assassin's lair. It is said that between the acts on that fatal night at Ford's Theater, Lincoln had talked to her of plans for the future, when they would be free from the heavy cares of the White House. She spoke of travel, and he replied that there was no other place he should like so much to visit as Jerusalem.

Those were his last words, his wife afterward said. The curtain went up. The crazed Booth noiselessly entered the President's box, and turned the stage play into tragedy. The great War President became the nation's beloved martyr.

## CHAPTER XVII

### ANDREW JOHNSON

(1865-1869)

ANDREW JOHNSON was the only President who described himself as a handicraftsman. Apprenticed to a tailor when he was ten years old, he never in all his life spent so much as one day in a schoolroom. He was scarcely past his infancy when his father died from exhaustion, after having saved Colonel Thomas Henderson, editor of the *Raleigh Gazette*, from drowning.

All that is known of Jacob Johnson, Andrew's father, is taken from an obituary notice in an old Raleigh paper, dated January 10, 1812. It states that Jacob Johnson had occupied a "humble but useful station" in society, which consisted of being city constable, sexton, and porter to the bank. Even less has been written about Andrew Johnson's mother. There is no mention of how she supported the boy, left fatherless at five, for the five years that remained before he was apprenticed to the tailor.

From the outset, in this boy's struggle for existence, he manifested an energy and a self-reliance that could see no difficulties in the way of any purpose upon which he had set his heart. While he was still a young boy, it was observed that he might be disappointed, but that he could not be defeated. If

he were thwarted in any undertaking one day, he tried again the next. Obstacles appeared only to excite greater energies in him; and in no thing was this leading feature of his character more worthily brought into prominence than in his determination to attain by perseverance the benefits denied him by poverty.

In Raleigh, there was a gentleman who was in the habit of visiting the tailor shop where Andrew was apprenticed, and of reading aloud to the journeymen while they worked. The book he most favored was *The American Speaker*, a volume which contained many speeches of eminent British orators and statesmen. The boy, "Andy," as he was called, became very much interested in these daily readings, and he soon was inspired with the ambition to learn to read as well as the reader who visited the shop. He began to study the alphabet, obtaining assistance by applying first to one journeyman and then to another. After he had acquired a knowledge of the letters, he wanted to borrow the book which he had heard read. The owner, learning of his desire, kindly made him a present of the book, and gave him some instruction as to the use of letters in forming words. Thus, Mr. John Savage relates in his biography of Johnson, he learned to spell and to read at the same time, in the first book that there is any record of his having seen.

This new and dazzling enjoyment opened to the boy a sense of power so satisfying that it dispelled all remembrance of the drudgery by which it had been won. He was henceforth inspired with an insatiable desire to explore the mines of knowledge



contained in books. After working ten or twelve hours at his apprentice bench daily, he would devote one or two more each night to developing his reading. By this close application he had learned to master words with some facility when his term of apprenticeship expired. He was sixteen at that time, facing the world without a cent, but with a trade of which he was always proud. He was rich in energy, and possessed the ambition to continue the education begun under such exacting difficulties.

A Mr. Litchford, an old journeyman tailor of Raleigh, foreman in the shop where young Johnson worked, claims that Andrew ran away before he finished his apprenticeship. His story is that a Mrs. Wells, who lived in the town, had two likely daughters, and because she would not permit Andy and another boy, who worked in a rival tailor shop, to visit the girls, they "shunted" her house one Saturday night. The next day the lady learned who had rocked her house, and she threatened to prosecute the boys on Monday. They heard of the lady's threat and decided to "cut and run." They went to South Carolina, and Andrew Johnson was advertised as a runaway "bound boy." Litchfield states that after a year and a half Andrew returned to Raleigh, and finding that Mr. Selby, the tailor to whom he had been apprenticed, had moved away, he walked twenty miles to see him, and tried to make arrangements to pay him for his time.

According to Mr. Savage, however, Andrew Johnson went to South Carolina only after finishing his apprenticeship, and worked as a journeyman tailor in the vicinity of Laurens Court House. There he

fell in love with a very estimable young lady, but as he was a poor stranger, not quite seventeen, the girl was not very favorable to his suit. His youthful sensitiveness would not permit him to remain where his passion received open sneers instead of pitying smiles, but as was usual with Johnson, the unpleasant episode resulted in a strengthening of his will, which enabled him to lift himself above circumstances. He returned to Raleigh and procured work. He remained but a few months, however, then decided to go west. This time he took his mother, who was entirely dependent on him for her support.

Arriving in a romantic valley between the Allegheny and the Cumberland Mountains, where the first settlements were made in Tennessee, Johnson stopped on the edge of a small town called Greenville, in Green County. There, above the door of a two-room house that stood on a hill near the village, he tacked up a sign:

### A. JOHNSON, TAILOR.

His good star had led him to this place, for if his earlier boyhood love had been scorned by a South Carolina beauty, he found a kinder if not more beautiful girl in this lovely valley. And though he was still a youthful lover, only a year passed before he was married to the charming girl.

Her name was Eliza McCardle, and she was even more youthful than her boy husband. He had not reached his nineteenth year, and she had just turned seventeen. There is not much told of Miss McCardle, but her career as the wife of Andrew Johnson

bespeaks a firmness and strength of character which stamps her "God's best gift to man—a noble woman." All that can be found concerning her parentage is that she was the only daughter of a Scotch shoemaker, and that her mother was a widow for many years. That she had received some education in the usual branches of study which were given in the schools of that day was evident from the fact that she was capable of instructing her young husband. It is said that she was of the purest type of southern beauty, very graceful and agreeable in her manners.

Soon after Andrew Johnson married, he went farther west, with the hope of finding a more favorable place to settle; but failing to do so, he returned to Greenville. Books had been necessarily put aside during the three years since his apprenticeship, years shaped by the necessity of finding a location suitable for increasing his fortune, to meet the needs of the family responsibility he had undertaken. But now he returned to his studies with an energy intensified by the loving tutelage of his young wife. His days began to be as happy as they were long. They were filled with toil, but lightened by the presence of his bride, ever near to teach him while he worked for her meager comforts. The romance thus kindled between this couple in the wilds of Tennessee became a living, ennobling flame that was to burn in their hearts as brightly through all the sad, hard years of their lives as it did in the fiery morning of youth. A glimpse of those two was an inspiring sight,—the lad mechanically plying the needle while his brain followed the instruction of his teacher, his face, perhaps, often brightening childishly at her

approval of his correct answers. When the hours of tailoring were at an end, and they had partaken of their simple evening meal, the more difficult study of writing would begin by candle-light. The village below their cottage on the hill was wrapped in slumber, and the owls in the mountains around them were hooting to each other before his wife's cramped fingers stopped guiding the still more cramped ones of her husband. Like a tiny child, he had first to learn how to make his letters, and then how to join those letters into words.

As young Johnson's education advanced, he began to desire more and higher learning, although the disadvantages of his position would have discouraged almost any other man. But intense desire usually finds or makes opportunities. About this time a debating society was formed by the young men of the neighborhood. It was connected with Greenville College, which was situated four miles from the county seat, the village of Greenville. Andrew Johnson joined that society, and by his natural talent for oratory and his capacity for attracting and holding the interest of the students, he made warm friends of them all. He walked the four miles and back to attend these meetings every week, and soon his humble abode, with a tailor's platform and one or two stools, became the regular gathering place for the young men of the college as they went into town for pleasure or business. They called him "the village Demosthenes," and delighted to stop at the little house, where they always found amusement and were always made welcome. We are told that Johnson took more than ordinary interest in catering

to the students' pleasure, as did also his agreeable young wife.

It was only natural that his own hard experience, added to his increasing ability to express himself, should make him the exponent of the needs of the working class. Soon he was giving voice to the feelings of the working men of Greenville. He made them conscious of their strength and proud of their opposition to the aristocrats, who, until then, had ruled the community; and before he reached his majority, he was elected alderman on the working-man ticket. Two years later he was made mayor. The thrifty and industrious young wife, who had so patiently and hopefully worked over his studies with him, day after day and night after night, was beginning to reap her reward. How intense must have been her joy and satisfaction as the years flew by, each bringing fresh laurels to crown her husband's efforts.

After three terms as mayor, Andrew Johnson was elected to the Legislature, to which he was returned for eight successive years. Ten years he was a representative in Congress, and for two terms, Governor of Tennessee. Finally he was elected to the Senate. Mr. James Morgan says that his worthiest monument as a legislator is the Homestead Law, which opened the great National domain to the landless poor, a measure that Johnson introduced and perseveringly championed against a lobby of land-grabbers.

No one ever questioned his honesty or his courage as he forced his way up the ladder of success. His bold self-reliance became heroic in the eyes of the nation, when he breasted the wave of secession which



ELIZA MCCARDLE JOHNSON  
(*Mrs. Andrew Johnson*)



engulfed his section and swept out of the Union even his own State. He not only fought secession in the Senate, but he challenged it in Tennessee; and when he was appointed military governor of his State by Lincoln, his dauntless, fiery soul became the very breastwork of the Union. Exiled from his home and family, his home seized by the Confederacy as the property of "an alien enemy," Andrew Johnson remained as stubbornly a Southerner and a Democrat as he was a Union man. It was as a War Democrat and Southern Unionist that his name was placed on the ticket as Vice-President when Lincoln was nominated for the second term. From his military post at Nashville, he was called to the Vice-Presidency, and one month later, through Lincoln's assassination, to the Presidency. He had triumphed over those who boasted of their descent as he boasted of his ascent. But he never forgot his Maker; nor did his love ever wane for the wife he delighted to honor by his successes.

The toil and worry of the long, hard years of Mrs. Johnson's life had broken her strength. It was as an invalid with a sad, pale face and sunken eyes that she entered the White House, and she never appeared in Washington society except to be present at one party given to her grandchildren. Yet it has been agreed by all who have written of that time that none but a woman of rare powers could have reared such daughters as Mrs. Patterson and Mrs. Stover. The former, the wife of a Senator, took the place of her invalid mother as First Lady of the land. Mrs. Patterson is said to have resembled her father in a very marked degree, though with features



of a much softer mould, and larger, more expressive eyes. In executive ability and comprehensiveness she was his exact reproduction, as was shown by her able and efficient manner of bringing order out of the chaos they found at the White House.

The harrowing scenes through which the former occupants of the Executive Mansion had passed, and the immense crowds who, during the preceding years of war, had so continually filled the President's house, had worn out the furniture and ruined the carpets. There was no sign of neatness or comfort in this home when the Johnsons arrived. The task of Martha Johnson Patterson was to put aside all ceremony and work constantly to bring a habitable residence out of dirty, soiled surroundings. That she accomplished her undertaking with credit was noted in an account of the first reception held by President Johnson, on January 1, 1866. "The old injured furniture of the East Room was removed, and the worn-out carpets covered with linen. Natural flowers made up in profusion, beauty, and fragrance for any lack of ornaments. The quiet dignity of the President's two daughters, who assisted him, and the simple neatness of their apparel surprised all who assembled to see them. Mrs. Patterson wore blue velvet with a point-lace collar, her dark hair put back from her face with pendant curls and adorned by a single white japonica. Her sister, Mrs. Stover, in half mourning for her husband, was handsome in a heavy black silk."

In the early spring of that year, an appropriation of thirty thousand dollars was made by Congress, to refurnish the White House. All the long, hot sum-

mer that followed saw Mrs. Patterson struggling unceasingly with repair work and with the renovating of old furniture. In this ordeal the firmness of her character was fully tested, but she triumphed over every difficulty, and so managed the amount appropriated that the Mansion was once again comfortable, and was said to be more beautiful than it had ever been. When a newspaper correspondent visited Mrs. Patterson, soon after the renovation had been completed, and remarked on the simplicity and beauty of the establishment, she replied, "We are a plain people, sir, from the mountains of Tennessee, called here for a short time by a national calamity; I trust too much will not be expected of us." The *Albany Evening Journal* commented upon the homeliness of that utterance, and said, "The sentiment must meet with response from every true lover of democratic ideas and practices."

Johnson was the only President put on trial for impeachment. The difficulty arose out of a difference of opinion between him and Congress, upon the question of the reconstruction of the States. He wished to grant pardon and receive States back into the Union, as if the executive power were supreme. On the other hand, it was claimed that Congress alone had the power to make conditions for the readmission of the seceded States. Therefore, it was war to the death between the President and Congress. When Congress passed bills the President vetoed them, and Congress would pass them over the veto. Then, when Johnson removed one of the cabinet members in violation of the Tenure-of-Office Act, which he had vetoed, Congress cast off all restraint

and ordered that he be impeached for high crime and misdemeanors.

During those tedious three months of her father's trial, Mrs. Patterson was particularly dignified and reticent, going on calmly with her duties, saying, "We have nothing to do but wait." What a sweet victory ensued for the man who began his Presidency under a cloud of tragedy and came near ending it in another! Not only was the impeachment trial a failure, but six years after his term in the White House expired, he was again elected United States Senator from Tennessee.

The cares of office, though, and the discordant tumult in which Andrew Johnson had lived, seriously impaired his health. He made only one speech in that forum of his enemies to which he returned, but we are told that he did it becomingly. In courteous, earnest terms he begged the Senators to forget what had gone before and to lay aside party feeling for the sake of reunion. Mr. James Morgan says that in that speech the Southern Unionist sounded the keynote of his whole life when he pleaded, "Let peace and unison be restored to the land! May God bless this people and God save the Constitution!"

It was on March 4, 1874 that Johnson took his seat in the Senate. The following summer, while he was visiting his daughter, Mrs. Stover, in the mountains of Carter County, he passed away. He had seemed perfectly well when he left his home in Greenville to make the visit, but, like a blow struck from behind, says Lloyd Paul Striker, apoplexy took him away.

Next to the intensity of love which he bore his wife

and children came Johnson's passion for the Constitution of his country. In one of his speeches he declared, "When I die I desire no better winding sheet than the Stars and Stripes, and no softer pillow than the Constitution of my country."

These words were remembered. Tender hands draped about him the flag he had so bravely defended, and his head was pillowed on a copy of the Constitution. His loving wife, in spite of her failing strength, was, to the last hour of his active life, his patient, forbearing counselor. Perhaps she found her sweetest comfort, in that sad parting, in the respect of the people who came from the hills and valleys far and near, to journey with their great neighbor to his last resting place.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### ULYSSES S. GRANT

(1869-1877)

ON the banks of the Ohio River, at a point about twenty-five miles east of Cincinnati, stood a one-story cabin home of two small rooms, with an outside chimney, much after the fashion of a Southern cottage. There, on April 27, 1822, a baby boy started his parents and relatives arguing over a name for him. Finally, the names suggested were written on slips of paper, which were placed in a hat, and a drawing was made to decide the matter. "Hiram" and "Ulysses" were the two names drawn. Hamlin Garland says that Grandfather Simpson had suggested Hiram because he considered it "a handsome name"; and that Grandmother Simpson had suggested Ulysses because she had been reading a translation of Fenelon's *Telemachus* and had been much impressed by the description of Ulysses. Jesse Grant, the baby's father, must also have liked the classical name, as it is the only one by which he ever called him.

The father of this baby had come from a strong family of admirable record, his forefathers having been soldiers in the colonial and Revolutionary wars, in which his grandfather had attained the rank of captain, and his father that of lieutenant. They

were from Connecticut, and Jesse Grant had brought the vigor and shrewd economy of his forebears to the less thrifty Ohio border. He was nearly six feet tall, physically and mentally robust, with a large head, and face strongly moulded. A radical in politics, he was always quite ready to dispute with his neighbors.

President Grant tells us in his "Memoirs" that his father set up for himself in the tannery business at Ravenna when he first went to Ohio, and that a few years later he moved to Point Pleasant. Other writers claim that through sickness Jesse Grant lost his business in Ravenna and all his savings, and that he was only the foreman of a tannery in Point Pleasant when Ulysses was born. However that may be, he was able to set up in business again before the baby was a year old, and his keen perception of the commercial change then going on decided him to place his new tannery at Georgetown, the county seat of Brown, which had the advantage of being situated in a wilderness of tanbark. "By reason of its oaks, Georgetown became the boyhood home of Ulysses Grant," says Garland.

Jesse Grant married Hannah Simpson, the third child of John Simpson, who went from Pennsylvania to Ohio about the year 1819. President Grant says that his mother was twenty years old at this time, and that she married his father two years later. She is described as a sweet, gentle woman, universally beloved; a person of reticence, even temper, and great patience, qualities that Ulysses is said to have inherited from her.

Mr. Grant, being proud of Ulysses, and believing

that the boy would become a great man if given the opportunity, determined that he should have an education. He had always been painfully mindful of his own sad lack in that respect, and when Ulysses had learned all that the village school could teach him, he was sent to a school in Maysville, a much larger town in Kentucky. The next winter, he went to a special school in Ripley, Ohio; and he was at the latter school when he received his appointment to West Point.

It was at this period of his life that the name of Hiram was lost to him forever. The Honorable Thomas L. Hamer, who was a member of Congress from Ohio, had had a difference with young Grant's father over politics. Consequently, when Mr. Grant desired to obtain, for his son, an appointment to the Academy, he wrote to Mr. Morris, a senator of the State. Mr. Morris turned the letter over to Hamer and he, not remembering the boy's name and knowing that his mother's maiden name was Simpson, had the appointment given to U. S. Grant. Cadet William Sherman was taken by the suggestive initials when he saw the name on the Academy bulletin, and he dubbed the stumpy, freckle-faced plebe "Uncle Sam."

Grant graduated from West Point with the rank of second lieutenant in the first year of his manhood, and was assigned to duty at Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, with the Fourth United States Infantry. His first conquest, after entering upon military life, was the heart of seventeen-year-old Julia Dent, a sister of one of his classmates. The Dents' home was at White Haven, about nine miles from the city of St.

Louis, on the famous Gravois road; and, as Fred Dent had visited at the home of Ulysses, it was natural that the latter should be invited to visit at the Dent home when he went to the barracks overlooking the Mississippi.

Julia Dent was a slender, vivacious, fair-complexioned girl, as ready to ride a spirited horse as was young Grant, or to tramp the wooded lanes and secluded bypaths. On horseback, she took him to visit all the neighbors and to all the dancing parties and "bees" given in the vicinity. He was not a dancing man, but he looked well in his lieutenant's uniform, with its big epaulets, its brass buttons, and its broad red sash; and being human, no doubt he enjoyed showing it off to the girls, and winning their shy glances of admiration. His most charming characteristic is said to have been his extreme courtesy; he was as full of delicate, kindly attention to older women, even the aged, as to the most fascinating young girl. To this was perhaps due Mrs. Dent's gracious approval of his preference for her daughter. Colonel Dent, as the father was called, took no special interest in the thoughtful youth, whom he considered quite commonplace.

The following May, Lieutenant Grant had a furlough to visit his parents in Ohio. While he was on this visit he heard that his regiment was ordered to Fort Jessup in Louisiana, to form a part of General Taylor's army, which was gathering in expectation of the pending war with Mexico. This news developed his affection for Julia Dent so "palpably," he tells us in his "Memoirs," that there was no mistaking why he felt so sad over it. As soon as his



furlough was over, he hastened back to Jefferson Barracks, only to find the regiment gone and his belongings gone with it, packed up and taken along by a friend. He immediately asked for another short leave, procured a horse, and started for White Haven. He had to cross a creek on the Gravois road, which ordinarily contained not enough water to "run a coffee mill," as he says. But it had been raining heavily that week and he now found it overflowing, with a rapid current. One of his principles of conduct was never to turn back after he had started to go anywhere or to do anything; so now he plunged into the stream. In a moment he discovered that his horse was swimming and that he was being carried down by the current. With a mysterious power that he had possessed from childhood, of communicating his wishes to a horse, he headed this one for the opposite bank. The animal began to battle bravely with the current, and urged by Grant's gentle coaxing, he soon reached it with his rider. Wet through, but undaunted, Grant galloped on to his destination, and borrowed a dry suit from his future brother-in-law. It was a bad misfit, he tells us, which added to his awkwardness when he came to his proposal. Yet the young lady was kind, and he joined his regiment a few days later, comforted by a very satisfactory understanding between them.

No engagement was announced, as the matter had to be referred to Julia's father; and for the present, the lovers were content to keep the sweet understanding secret. General Taylor's army was first called an Army of Observation, then an Army of Occupation, and finally an Army of Invasion; but before it

entered upon active war duties, Grant obtained another short leave and astonished the family at White Haven by his appearance, though this time he was in proper military trim. The status of his engagement did not quite please him, and his longing to see his sweetheart before going into actual service made him restive. Plucking up his courage, he interviewed Colonel Dent, and though he was given a very reluctant consent, the engagement was permitted and announced.

After the war, as soon as he could reach White Haven, there was a wedding. His regiment had taken part in the battles of Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, Monterey, and Buena Vista, and Lieutenant Grant had several times received honorable mention in official dispatches. The wedding was a quiet one, celebrated on August 22, 1848, with only very modest notice in the newspapers of St. Louis. Neighborhood gossip, however, circulated tales describing the shy soldier-bridegroom who found his long sword in the way of his legs, and who trembled more than at Monterey. Grant had been promoted to brevet captain, and, on a four months' furlough, took his bride to visit his parents, his relatives, his boyhood friends, and his neighbors. It was a happy honeymoon. Grant's parents, then living at Bethel, were overjoyed at the return of their son and full of welcome for the little bride. His father is said to have nearly burst with pride over his rising soldier son; and the young captain was like a boy on a holiday. He rode madly up and down the roads between Bethel, Georgetown, and Mount Pleasant, exhibiting for the villagers his new prowess with the lasso on

calves and pigs. To their wonder, he talked in Spanish with a Mexican; and in the evenings, when the neighbors gathered around him in front of stores to ask questions about the war, he would tell them of the campaigns in which he had taken part, often holding their attention until late into the night. These people were done with sneering at him now as the "good-for-nothing who wasted his time galloping round on fast horses and studying book l'arning." He was recognized as a soldier and a man of honorable deeds.

November brought Grant's happy furlough to a close, and he took his young wife to the barracks at Sackett's Harbor, a military post on Lake Ontario. There he settled to his work, and made friends by his modest demeanor and his gentle habits of command. The following spring they went to Detroit; but after four years of happy married life, the Fourth Infantry, to which he belonged, was ordered to the wilds of Oregon. One son had been born to them, and another child was expected, making it inadvisable to take his wife with him. So, for a time, she was to be with his family, and then visit her own, until he could send for her. That never happened; camp life in time of peace was ever irksome to Grant, and added to the separation from his family, it became insupportable. "Idle, lonely, homesick for wife and baby, and indifferent to books, this man, whose life and speech were as clean as a woman's, found the only possible excitement in the bottle," says Mr. James Morgan. He had learned the use of liquor in the Mexican War, yet up to that time there was little evidence of his ever having drunk to



JULIA DENT GRANT  
(*Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant*)



excess. Even then, it is stated, he drank much less than other officers whose reputations were not seriously sullied. He was so constituted that a small amount of liquor affected him strongly; a single glass made him unsteady on his feet, but he was never guilty of gross indecorum. He had been promoted to full rank of captain. This enforced greater idleness, with little to do by way of amusement, besides satisfying a thirst. Hard drinking was the common diversion of army officers at the dreary frontier post. Grant fell so far under the influence of love for drink that he was told he would have to reform or resign from the army. "I will resign and reform," he answered. After sending in his resignation to Jefferson Davis, then Secretary of War, he sailed for New York.

He landed in that city without a cent, and was plunged into a dejection that was almost despair. Here a classmate, Simon Bolivar Buckner, opened his purse to him, and Grant went home to his father. But he was received very grimly; Jesse Grant could see no hope of further honor in this son, and he was too deeply humiliated by such a return to welcome him. His gentle mother, however, seemed to understand the temptations and dangers of army life and was glad to have him out of the service. With that bit of encouragement, he could not get to his loving wife quickly enough. She awaited him in her father's home with their two children, one of them a little son he had never seen.

The next few years set ineffaceable lines of gravity and care upon the face of Grant, but he took up his broken life bravely. For a while he was a full-time



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"hand" on the farm of Colonel Dent; he bound wheat and helped with the plowing, or with any other work that was done in the fields. Though his father-in-law and all his immediate neighbors were slaveholders, the farmers' sons quite generally worked in the fields with the negroes, and they respected Captain Grant for his manly resolution. Mrs. Grant owned a piece of wild timber land which was a wedding gift from her father. After the harvesting at White Haven was completed that fall, Grant set forth to clear this land and to make a home that would be his family's own. All that winter he worked at cutting the logs, and finally completed a four-room cabin. He gave the place the well-deserved name of "Hard Scrabble."

Mr. Grant says that for the next four years he never lost a day from clearing and working this little farm. "If nothing else could be done, I would load a cord of wood on a wagon and take it into the city for sale. I managed to get along very well until attacked by ague and fever, then persuaded by Mrs. Grant, I gave up the farm and moved into the city to try real estate business in partnership with her cousin." Since he had always been a reticent man, that was the most unfortunate thing he could have done. When the failure came, and he could get nothing else to do, he applied to his father for a clerkship in a leather store that the latter was conducting in Galena, Illinois.

The Union was already dissolving when Grant moved his family to Galena. A year later, when Lincoln called for troops, Grant was known to the town only as a silent man who had arrived there in a

faded, blue army overcoat. Since the coat indicated his military experience, he was called upon to preside over a meeting to raise a company of volunteers, and he went with them to Springfield. Governor Yates was living at the hotel where Grant happened to stop, and when Grant thought his duties ended and was preparing to leave for Galena, the Governor spoke to him. Calling him by his army title of "Captain," he told him to come to the Executive office. Grant went, and was given a clerkship in the Adjutant-General's office. Later the Twenty-first Regiment of Infantry refused to go into service with their chosen colonel, and Governor Yates appointed Grant colonel of that regiment.

Grant hated warfare. In the Mexican War he had been content to be sidetracked from the fighting line into the Quartermaster Department. Speaking of the first time he came in sight of the enemy in the Civil War, he said: "I had not the moral courage to halt and consider what to do; I kept right on." And that is said to be how Grant got to Appomattox. Many considered Grant ruthless, prodigal of the lives of his men; but his son, Jesse, says that he regarded war, as he did an aching tooth. To save greater suffering, one must bear the more acute, but shorter pain of removal. "Keep moving" was always his watchword. "I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer." On that principle, the man who entered the army as a simple volunteer captain, with not a friend at his back, and with only a long, unbroken trail of disappointments behind him, rose to be general-in-chief.

History tells us, too, that no conqueror was ever

more magnanimous than Grant. Sad and depressed, he says, at the downfall of a valiant foe, he met Lee at Appomattox as if he were a neighbor in distress. The leniency of his terms of peace was unprecedented. The people of the South were hungry; they should be fed. The soldiers needed their horses for plowing; they should take them. Lee's hand moved toward his sword to surrender it; Grant waved it aside. On the field of Appomattox he began the work of reconstruction with generosity to the gallant foe.

Mr. James Morgan says that Grant was a failure at thirty-nine, but that at forty-one he was the most successful soldier of his generation. "With the passing of Lincoln," Morgan continues, "he towered above not only all the other generals of the Civil War, but also above the statesmen of that day." He was a man without a party, and he stood for the Union. Unfortunately there was no place for him to serve, except as a partisan and politician. Consequently, when, four years later, he became President, there were several difficulties before him. The first one arose over the selection of a cabinet. Never having held a council of war or consulted any of his army leaders, he did not now consult the Republican leaders. Those first chosen for the cabinet learned of their appointment from the newspapers, after the inauguration. One was ineligible, others declined the honor, and there had to be repeated changes.

Mrs. Grant came to the White House with much enthusiasm. She had always loved the ease of social position, and the festivity of receptions and entertainments was the delight of her soul; if she was not

First Lady to the manner born, she possessed social ease and culture enough to maintain her position. The best society of Washington flocked to her receptions, and she introduced the pleasing custom of surrounding herself with ladies of distinction to assist in doing the honors on state occasions.

The President's eldest son was a cadet at West Point during Grant's first administration. His only daughter, Nellie, whose natural sweetness made her a general favorite in Washington, was married at the White House during his second term. She went with her husband, Mr. Algernon Sartoris, to live in England. On leaving the Executive Mansion three years later, the first place the President wanted to visit was his daughter's home.

With Mrs. Grant and his youngest son, Jesse, he went to meet all the ovation and honor he had received at home at the close of the Civil War. He was "puzzled to find himself a personage," said James Russell Lowell. Traveling had always been General Grant's favorite amusement, and he decided, after visiting England, to make a tour of the world. It was a wonderful journey, for emperors and kings honored him, marshals paraded their troops before him, and statesmen conferred with him. He wandered over Europe, Asia, and Africa for more than two years before returning to America. His brilliant reception abroad caused his political friends to suggest his name for a third presidential term, and neither he nor Mrs. Grant was averse to the idea. The truth was that General Grant needed a position, as he had spent most of his money. He wrote to a friend that he would either have to return

to Galena to live, or go on a farm. Failing to be elected, he settled in New York on the advice of his second son, Ulysses, and became a partner in a Wall Street bank with a "young Napoleon of finance."

Established in a big house, with money rolling in for the next three years, General Grant, who had always had a weakness for rich men who succeeded where he failed, felt, at last, that he was a success as a capitalist. There seemed no more worlds to conquer; he and his family could take their ease.

But Christmas Eve of 1883 brought a period of suffering that was to end two years later at Mount McGregor. General Grant slipped and fell upon the ice at his own door, and ruptured a muscle in his thigh. This confined him to his bed for weeks. To add to his suffering, he had a sharp attack of pleurisy. Before he could walk without crutches, his son had the painful duty of informing him that the bank which had become the firm of Grant and Ward had gone down in shameful failure. Shortly before, Ward, the "young Napoleon of finance," had requested Grant to seek, from William H. Vanderbilt, a loan of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, to save the bank from crashing. When he had limped into Mr. Vanderbilt's office, he had obtained the loan without security. It was not strange that hours after the failure was announced, General Grant was found sitting at his desk, a broken man.

Out of bad came good, for his "Personal Memoirs" opened with the frank admission that he had consented to write the book only because he and his family were living on borrowed money, and a pub-

lisher had proposed the undertaking. He had always been averse to literary work, but honest independence was a spur to effort. He was grateful to discover, as he pursued his theme, a gift for unfolding a moving tale of his adventures and achievements in the service of his country.

One day, however, in the midst of his writing, he felt a stabbing pain in his throat. The pains kept returning at intervals, and his wife's anxiety and urgency finally induced him to see a physician. When examinations had been made, the terrible truth was discovered that a deadly cancer had him in its clutch. With Spartan grimness he fought it, working at his writing even after he was prostrated by the mortal illness, causing sleepless nights of fearful suffering. Finally he was reduced to whispering his dictation to a stenographer, and when his speech was entirely gone, he wrote out the closing chapters on a pad in his lap. Surely the greatness of his past was overshadowed by the heroism of his last days.

Before the close of General Grant's life, a legal examination of the affairs of the suspended bank swept away all tarnish from his honor. It was made plain to all the world that he had been the deceived, not the deceiver. And in the summer of 1885, when a friend put his cottage on Mount McGregor at his disposal, he manifested a meager wistfulness to be among the trees. He was removed from New York on June 16th, and as the train whirled past West Point, he looked from the car window and turned his eyes toward his wife with a sad, tired smile. He had thought it beautiful when he entered it as a

seventeen-year-old boy; it was beautiful to him still, when he passed it, a dying man of threescore years and three.

General Simon Bolivar Buckner, his classmate at West Point and foeman at Fort Donelson, visited him at this cottage on the mountain top, and both men were deeply affected. "It is a purely personal visit," he said to General Grant. "I want you to know that many Confederate officers sympathize with you in your sickness." The Northern chieftain wrote on his pad, "I appreciate your calling highly. I have witnessed since my illness just what I have wished to see since the war: harmony—harmony and good will between the sections. . . ."

Mrs. Grant had displayed uncommon fortitude all through his illness by appearing cheerful in his presence, and she kept it up until the end. On the 22nd of July he wrote on his pad that he desired to be in bed. After months in a chair, his tired limbs were stretched out and he lay at full length once more. He drew a sigh of relief and smiled, and a deep sleep fell upon him almost at once. His family gathered around him, and the physicians, who had been in the house for some days fearing an agonizing death, knew that all danger of that had passed. Mrs. Grant held his hand all night, looking lovingly into his eyes whenever he opened them. She was still holding it at seven minutes past eight the next morning, when he quietly breathed his last.

## CHAPTER XIX

### RUTHERFORD BIRCHARD HAYES

(1877-1881)

RUTHERFORD BIRCHARD HAYES was born in the first brick house to be built in Delaware, Ohio. Like Andrew Jackson, he was a posthumous child, his father having died of malarial fever almost three months before he was born.

The family had come to Ohio from the Green Mountain State by wagon train, five years before. The father of Hayes claimed to be descended from Scotch settlers who came to Connecticut in 1680. They pushed on into Vermont and became inn-keepers and blacksmiths, strong and sturdy, the best sort of New England stock. The father of the President was the first man among them who was not considered strong enough for hard work. He was, accordingly, placed in a store when quite young.

Born at Brattleboro, this Rutherford set up in the merchant's business at Dummerston, on reaching manhood. He married Sophia Birchard, of Huguenot ancestry, whose forefathers, like Hayes's, had settled in Connecticut before going to Vermont. Thus one sees that Hayes, the President, inherited something of an aristocratic strain. It is said that he was proud of his Scotch ancestry, though, in reality, he was mostly English on both sides.



It took the Hayes family six weeks to journey from Dummerston, Vermont, to Delaware County, Ohio. There were two children, Fanny and Lorenzo; Sardis Birchard, a young brother of Mrs. Hayes; and Arcena Smith, an orphan girl relative. Lorenzo Hayes was accidentally drowned three years after he came to Ohio. The father of the President is said to have taken eight thousand dollars in gold to the new land, intending to invest it at Cleveland; but, because of the prevalence of ague and fever there, he went on to Delaware County and there bought farm land. It was the income from this farm that mainly supported Mrs. Hayes and her children after her husband's death. H. J. Eckenrode says, in his biography of Hayes, that it was a narrow living, yet one that distinguished the Hayes family from their toiling neighbors, as it was not won by work.

Rutherford Hayes was a sickly child, and his sister Fanny established herself as his constant nurse and companion. She mothered him as all small girls mother weakly younger brothers, and felt all the responsibility of his natural protector. "She was ever loving and kind to me, and very generous," he said, writing of her thirty years later, when reflecting on what he had lost in her death.

Uncle Sardis provided for their books and for such pleasures as they had; and their mother trained them very carefully in spelling and reading until they began to attend the district school. Fanny was easily the best scholar of any of the pupils, and she became a general favorite. "She read a great deal," wrote her brother, "and all the books we had were read by her before she was ten years old. Whatever

joys other boys had over me, none had such a sister as mine." As she grew older, she rode gracefully, was a good rifle shot, and played chess skilfully; yet she possessed the virtue of being a retiring, modest girl. She wished that she had been born a boy, but only that she might attend college. She did go to the Putnam Seminary to finish her education when her brother went to an academy at Norwalk, Ohio.

From this academy, Rutherford Hayes was sent to Mr. Webb's school in Middletown, Connecticut, where he made such progress with his studies that Mr. Isaac Webb, principal of the school, recommended that he be fitted to enter Yale College. His mother and his uncle were both proud to have him worthy of the advantages of so famous and established an institution as Yale, but the distance from home was a serious objection. It was therefore settled that he should enter a college in Ohio, and he was examined for the freshman class at Kenyon College, located in Gambier. He matriculated there one month after his sixteenth birthday.

"The college days of young Hayes were very happy days," states C. R. Williams. He devoted himself with zeal to his studies and bore his part in student activities with a fund of good spirits which rendered him popular with his classmates. He began to keep a diary in his junior year, and continued it, more or less regularly, to the end of his life. In it he frequently criticizes himself for his shortcomings, and frankly confesses infractions of good resolutions; yet there is abundant evidence of intellectual growth and sound judgment in determining courses of action and in forming associations. He was

chosen valedictorian of his class at Kenyon College, and the same honor was accorded his sister Fanny, for whom he felt the same affectionate interest as in childhood, when she graduated from the seminary at Putnam.

Following his graduation in August, two months before his twentieth year, he entered the law office of Sparrow and Matthews at Columbus. For the next ten months Blackstone, Chillingworth, logic, and the study of German engaged his attention; but he was also fond of general reading, and his cheerful, sanguine disposition caused society to make urgent demands upon him. He confides to his diary: "My chief obstacle to study is within myself. If I could master myself, all other difficulties would vanish." Not making the progress he thought he should, he entered Harvard Law School the following August. There he received instruction from those eminent jurists and teachers, Judge Story and Professor Greenleaf; and two years later he returned to Ohio and was admitted to the bar. He settled in Lower Sandusky (now Fremont), where his uncle, Sardis Birchard, was engaged in business.

The law business was slow in those days; a youthful attorney did not expect to be given a case of importance for years, and Hayes found plenty of time for general reading. Yet he was no recluse; he was gay by nature and a good talker, "fond of men and fonder of women." But he was cautious. He raved to his diary about girls, and flirted on the edge of love-making. He walked home with them from church, went on sleigh-riding parties, the chief winter diversion, and had his full share of fun at

picnics in summer. He wrote his mother teasing letters describing the wild life he was leading, playing "stealing partners" and "drop the handkerchief," and kissing screaming, giggling girls. This did not in the least deceive his mother, a rugged Calvinist and a strict Puritan. She knew that her Rutherford was the best of sons; and she did not worry, beyond frowning, when she read the letters.

Lower Sandusky finally began to wear on Hayes. He wanted business, and a chance to rise in his profession. Then, too, the uncongenial climate of Lake Erie was keeping his throat sore; he was told that he would have to go to a milder climate. His thoughts turned to Cincinnati; yet, to leave his uncle Sardis and tackle Cincinnati without income or friends was a serious matter. Hayes pondered the idea for months before making up his mind. That city would bring him within six hours' ride of the being he loved most in the world, his sister Fanny, who had married and was living in Columbus. So, after a visit to his relatives in New England for the benefit of his throat, and another to a classmate in Texas the following winter, he began the practice of law at Cincinnati in the month of January, 1850.

Two years here passed uneventfully, as far as his profession was concerned. But they were of vital significance for his inner life, for during these years Hayes fell in love and became engaged. He writes of himself as "not a ladies' man," yet his diary time and again contradicts that statement. At fifteen, says Eckenrode, he scribbled to a boy friend, "Tell me how A. Pickett flourishes with the girls. Tell him I flourish like a green bay tree." And while

he was in college he wrote of how he had enjoyed being with the girls of his home town during vacation. He wrote, too, that he had expected, or rather hoped, to marry early, and he made a wager with a fellow student at college that he would be married before he was twenty-five. The diary discloses that he frequently fancied himself in love; but on closer observation of the fair one, nothing serious ever resulted. The more he saw of life the more critical he became, and the less inclined to yield to a sudden vision of captivating grace and beauty. "How crotchety one grows on that subject as years bring wisdom and experience," he wrote.

Upon Lucy Webb, the daughter of Dr. James Webb, Hayes called almost as soon as he arrived in Cincinnati. When Lucy was two years old, her father died of cholera at Lexington, Kentucky, where he had gone to arrange for manumitting slaves that he had inherited. Mrs. Webb moved to Delaware when her two sons were ready for college, that the family might not be separated; and later, when the boys had graduated, she moved to Cincinnati. There the young men began their courses in medicine, and Lucy entered the Wesleyan Woman's College. Hayes had met Lucy in Delaware when she was a bonny school girl. It is claimed that she was chosen for him by his mother, but however that may be, the choice was soon well favored by the young attorney.

During the spring of that year he wrote in his diary, "I must keep guard on my susceptibilities or I will be in beyond my depth." Other notes follow, showing that his attentions did not discontinue, or even become less frequent; and in September, when

they were both attendants at the wedding of a friend, Hayes revealed to the diary how constantly "the bright eyes and merry smiles of lovely Lucy Webb" were in his thoughts. During the fall and winter months, it became very evident to him that he was "in beyond his depth." Lucy was exactly his opposite in coloring. She had lovely dark eyes and dark hair, with a broad brow and a handsome chin, while he was florid, blue-eyed, and sandy-haired. In repose, she looked simply very intelligent; but engaged in conversation, she became radiant, her smiles lighting up her face with great beauty. Hayes found a fascination in watching her, and the more he watched her the more he desired to provoke her smiles. His second spring in Cincinnati brought the climax; they became engaged, but Hayes could not marry until his prospects had taken a more decided upward turn. If, as had been hinted by many, his uncle Sardis had held a silver spoon to his mouth all his life hitherto, this was now ended; he would fashion a silver spoon of his own for the "divine being" that was to become his wife.

The way to a competency was not easily found. It is said that Hayes was no silver-tongued court pleader, such as thrived in the fifties. "He was essentially a technical lawyer, a strategist, a dealer in subtleties," says Eckenrode. He had a cool, analytical mind, and afterward won a noted place in the legal history of America by his appeals of criminal cases on technical points. But he had just discovered that he possessed such ability when he became engaged to Lucy Webb.

His first appointment by the court as counsel for

a criminal came five months before his engagement. Although he did not save the accused, he made so good an impression by his defense, that he was shortly afterward appointed to assist in the defense of Nancy Farrer. This woman was a poisoner, unquestionably guilty, and every one expected she would hang; a vicious, repellent creature of a low grade of mentality. Hayes went to work on her case harder than he had ever worked on one in his life. At the first trial, in Columbus, the hopeless accused was convicted. Hayes moved for a new trial, and in the Supreme Court he argued his plea of insanity so ably that the verdict of the lower court was reversed. It is said that the bill of exceptions which he filed covered sixty pages of foolscap. It must have occupied him for several weeks, but it was the turning point in his career, and he could at last venture upon the long anticipated step of marriage.

Having prayed for Heaven's most choice blessing on the "loved one whose nameless and numberless virtues and winning ways are growing into and around my heart," Hayes finished his heaviest struggle at law, and was married to Lucy Ware Webb on December 30, 1852,—“Thursday afternoon about 2 o'clock,” his diary particularizes, “at the residence of Lucy's mother, on the south side of Sixth Street . . . (No. 141), Cincinnati, Ohio.” Hayes was entering his thirty-first year, and his bride was nine years younger. They spent their blissful honeymoon with his beloved sister, Fanny, in Columbus, then made their home with Mrs. Webb for the next two years. The following extract from his diary, written after two months of marriage, shows the conjugal



*Courtesy of Dodd, Mead & Co.*

LUCY WEBB HAYES  
(*Mrs. Rutherford B. Hayes*)





felicity that lasted throughout their lives: "This is indeed life! The love of a wedded wife! Can anything enjoyed on earth be a source of truer, purer happiness? . . ."

Mrs. Hayes, too, loved her portion in life; home, church, society, books—each was a special delight. Their first child was born at her mother's house and was named Birchard in honor of Uncle Sardis; and in the autumn of the following year, Hayes bought a house and moved his family. A few years later, when there were other sons, he wrote, "Two things are now assured. . . . One is that I have neither health nor capacity to be a first-rate figure in my profession; the other, that I appear to have enough of both to acquire a reasonable success—enough for happiness. With this I am content." Yet the diary as a whole reveals that this was written only to convince himself that he was content, for he confessed that his ruling desire was to acquire fame.

As a boy he had dreamed of winning military glory, and the first sounds of the Civil War proved that that dream was not dead. He was flaming with enthusiasm; his opportunity had come. He had grown tired of the routine of law, and he had always possessed a taste for outdoor life. He found war his medium; and "it speaks well for his manhood that he was able to look on it as a picnic," says Eckenrode. He enjoyed camp life, he enjoyed battles, and it even appeared that he enjoyed being wounded at South Mountain. A ball shattered his left arm below the elbow in that battle. He later remarked that "it was by no means an unpleasant experience."

When Mrs. Hayes read in a Cincinnati paper that

her husband had been wounded, she started at once for the scene of action. Six days she spent in search of him, before a wounded soldier of his regiment directed her to Middletown. There, in the loft of an old barn, she found him. He received her cheerfully, saying that he knew she would come. Fortunately, her brother was taking care of him. He determined to save the arm,—a feat that others pronounced impossible. Hayes begged for it to be amputated, as his suffering grew great with threatened mortification. But his brother-in-law won out, and the arm was saved. Mrs. Hayes was a real soldier's wife. She nursed her husband until he was able to be taken home, and found time, besides, to visit the other wounded and dying soldiers, cheering them with her smiles, and turning her back to weep. She sewed and mended for them and wrote letters to their loved ones, endearing herself to the regiment. She afterward visited camp from time to time, until the war ended. She cheered the marching men to battle and sung to them when they were lonely, one of her best accomplishments being a good singing voice. They gave her the name of "Mother of the Regiment."

After being wounded, Hayes returned to active service with the rank of brigadier general. In 1864, he was nominated for Congress. A political friend wrote to him, urging him to come and canvass the State. "Any man who would leave the army to electioneer for Congress ought to be scalped," was his answer. "Hayes is stumping the Shenandoah Valley," read the banners that were put up all over Ohio by the party. This aroused wild enthusiasm, and Hayes was elected, but refused to leave the army

until the war ended. Not until the winter of 1865 did he enter Congress, resigning two years later to become Governor of Ohio. Seven years later, his uncle Sardis Birchard died, leaving Rutherford Hayes heir to his large estate and banking business. His next public honor was the nomination for President, at the Republican Convention in Cincinnati in 1876. It is singular that, though he personally was no party to it, fraud was charged in both his nomination and his election.

The first returns in November gave the election to Tilden, but again fraud was charged. Once before, when neither Jefferson nor Burr had been elected, the House of Representatives had chosen Jefferson. John Quincy Adams had been elected in the same way, but the Republican party now declined to submit to such a procedure. It was an uncomfortable position, and it stretched over four months. An Electoral Commission of fifteen men was appointed. It consisted of five Senators, five Representatives, and five Justices of the Supreme Court. Hayes was not declared elected until four o'clock in the morning of March 2, 1877, just fifty-six hours before the inauguration.

Mrs. Hayes was no mere parvenue when she came to the White House. She was well versed in the social etiquette of the best society, and she was the first mistress of the White House to hold a college degree. She had been First Lady of her State for the three terms during which her husband had been Governor, so the official position held no terrors for her. In fact, she frankly acknowledged her pleasure in becoming hostess of the Executive Mansion. The

historical associations of the rooms delighted her, and she told all her friends, when showing them through the White House, that no matter what they might build in the future, they could never build any rooms more beautiful than those. Mrs. Hayes was also an element in the administration, kind-hearted, strong-willed, disciplining her family and placing it on a pedestal as a model for the nation.

A strict believer in the practice of total abstinence from all intoxicating beverages, her order was that none should be served while she was mistress of the White House. When the Secretary of State declared that it was not seemly to invite the diplomatic corps to their dinners and to serve no wine, Mrs. Hayes would not yield a point. As usual in such extreme cases, a plan was formed to circumvent her. Oranges filled with frozen punch were prepared, and the uninitiated hostess wondered why this fruit was preferred to all other. "By my order," wrote Hayes in his diary, when he sustained his wife by having the frozen punch in oranges discontinued.

The most prominent entertainment given by President and Mrs. Hayes was the celebration of their silver wedding. The Rev. Dr. McCabe renewed the marriage ceremony he had performed a quarter of a century before. The white-flowered satin dress that the slim bride of other days had worn was made over for the occasion, and the President's niece, who, as a small girl of eight, had stood by and held the bride's hand, did the same now, a woman in her prime. "No presents" was engraved on the invitations; and only the officers of the Ohio volunteer infantry presumed to offer one. This was a silver plate, given in remem-

brance of kindness to the wounded, and inscribed, "To the Mother of the Regiment."

It has been granted to few couples to live together in more harmony and satisfaction than did President and Mrs. Hayes. She bore him eight children, five of whom grew to maturity, and there was always a bevy of young people at the Executive Mansion while she occupied it. One sixteen-year-old guest, it is said, went back to Cincinnati declaring that she would never be satisfied with any one less than a man destined to be President. She was Helen Herron, the future wife of William Howard Taft.

The years following the Presidency were an idyllic period for Mr. and Mrs. Hayes. They returned to Spiegel Grove in Fremont, the beautiful old home that had once been Uncle Sardis Birchard's. There, with their memories and their books, amid the gold of forsythia and daffodil in spring, they read and dreamed. Other months brought the perfume of hidden violets and lilies-of-the-valley, followed by the scent of summer roses. They took their part in the world about them, but to Lucy Webb Hayes, this evening of life was what no other part of it had been, a satisfied communion of loyal spirits.

## CHAPTER XX

### JAMES ABRAM GARFIELD

(1881)

GARFIELD was the last President to be born in a log cabin. The advent of this robust, blue-eyed boy into the world occurred on November 19, 1831, when everything about the little clearing in the wilderness of Orange, Cuyahoga County, Ohio, had the shut-in look of winter.

In James Garfield the best blood of thrifty New England ancestors met and mingled. Five lineal descendants are said to sleep in the cemetery at Watertown, Massachusetts, where the first Edward Garfield, a Puritan from the boundary of England and Wales, joined the distinguished John Winthrop in 1636. Abram Garfield, the father of James, and the ninth descendant of this Puritan, was born at Worcester, Otsego County, New York. His father died when Abram was but a baby, leaving his mother and several children in adverse circumstances. When the boy Abram was about twelve years old, a widow Ballou with four children moved from the wilds of New Hampshire to Worcester, and her ten-year-old girl, Eliza, became the playmate of the future President's father. In this childhood friendship the germ of a romantic love began to flourish.

James, the elder brother of Eliza, seeing the covered wagons passing through Worcester for the

“New West”—forest-covered Ohio—soon became impatient for his mother to join this migration. So Abram and his little sweetheart were parted. His mother passed away, and then he and his smaller brothers and sisters were distributed among relatives and neighbors. He himself had been “bound out” to serve a farmer named Stone, but he broke his bond when he was eighteen and tramped the muddy road the Ballous had followed to Ohio. They had settled near Zanesville, in the center of the State, and Abram never stopped until he found them. Eliza was teaching a small summer school, but two years later she gave it up to marry her persistent lover. They went to live in the one-room log cabin which the young husband had built in a clearing at Orange.

Eliza Ballou Garfield was descended from Maturin Ballou, a French Huguenot, who, upon the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, fled from the smiling vineyards of France to the rugged but liberty-giving land of America. He joined the colony of Roger Williams at Cumberland, Rhode Island, and there he built a church of curious architecture. From its pulpit he thundered forth his philippics against religious intolerance. For ten generations his ancestors had been eloquent preachers. With such a combination of Huguenot and Puritan in his ancestry, James Garfield could not fail to be of a religious mind.

Abram Garfield, who tramped so far to marry his childhood sweetheart, died from exposure to heat and from over-fatigue, as the result of fighting a forest fire that threatened to destroy his little crop and all the belongings on the small farm he had made for his



family in the Orange clearing. With the fatal chill upon him, he sat up in bed and said: "Liza, I have planted four young saplings in these woods. Take care of them." Those were his last words.

The situation seemed hopeless to the few neighbors who had settled around them, but not to Eliza Garfield. Her mother had been left with four fatherless children in a wilderness, and she had maintained them. Her daughter would maintain hers. So, a few days after the funeral, she went to work splitting the rails from some great chestnuts her husband had cut down in order to finish the fence around his wheat field. She plowed, she sowed, and she reaped, until the oldest boy was big enough to take this work off her hands. She also raised the sheep and wove the cloth for all their clothes, and being a good seamstress, made clothes for the shoemaker's children in return for his making shoes for her own.

Life was very busy for every member of that small pioneer home. Even little James, the twenty-month-old baby, toddled after his mother to listen to the hymns she sang while she worked. At three years of age, James Garfield was carried pickaback by his sister to a log school that was opened about a mile and a half from their home; and he took so precociously to books at this early age that the whole family centered on the one idea that James should have a good education. From the outset, Thomas had said, "Let James and the girls go to school; I don't need education to farm, and I'll be a farmer." So year after year this unselfish brother worked, denying himself everything that could help his brother to ambitious manhood. For it was evident,

as James Garfield grew into a sturdy, merry boy, that he had inherited from the long line of scholarly Ballous a strong love of learning, a capacity for thought, an eloquent tongue, and a tireless energy.

He, too, took up his share of the farm work before he was ten, going to school only in the winter months. At twelve, when Thomas, by "hiring out," had made money enough to have a small house built in place of the cabin that was by this time falling into ruin, James learned enough from watching the carpenter to get work with another at planing boards. He was paid a penny a board for this work, and he could plane a hundred boards in a day. He labored long days and late evenings at any work he could get on the farms of the settlers, who had come in great numbers since his babyhood,—haying, chopping wood at twenty-five cents a cord, boiling "black salts" from the ashes of burned logs, and finally driving the mules of a canal boat, until chills and fever overcame him and he had to be taken home to his mother to be nursed back to health.

This was the summer James was sixteen years old, and though he had acquired the strength of a grown man, his four hard months on the canal in Cleveland took heavy toll of his constitution. It was four months before the ague and fever departed and he regained his lost health. His loving mother devotedly nursed him, and while she read the Bible to him and sang hymns for his entertainment, just as she had done in his childhood, she also talked with him about his future. Long before, Mrs. Garfield had given a corner of her little farm as a site for a log school. That winter, the school was being taught

by a young man, Samuel Bates, not many years older than James. He was a good scholar, and had been attending Geauga Seminary, which had grown up in the adjoining county at a place called Chester. Mrs. Garfield induced Bates to visit James and to talk to him about education, until he was persuaded to accept the seventeen dollars she and his brother Thomas could lend him, to enter Geauga Seminary.

The faculty at this school consisted of three men and as many women, and the students were about one hundred in number, of both sexes. There was a library of one hundred and fifty volumes, and a literary society, which offered a chance for the practice of writing and speaking. Here James Garfield found a new world to be conquered in every science, a new country in every language. He never forgot for a moment the purpose for which he was there. Every recitation found his work well done; every meeting of the literary society knew his presence and heard his voice. He found, too, a modest, studious girl, of about his own age, named Lucretia Rudolph; but the importance of this discovery was to dawn upon him only very gradually. He saw her in recitation and often in the library, which was his favorite corner of the building. But he felt so awkward in his coarse, homespun clothes that their acquaintance made no progress during all that first term.

During his summer vacation he became as busy as he had been before his illness, when the neighbors spoke of him as the most industrious boy in Ohio. He returned home and helped his brother to build a barn; then he turned to wood-cutting, working in the fields, helping out at carpentry, and doing any

other work he could get. In the fall he returned to Geauga. After his first year he had taken an examination and had received a certificate to teach a district school. He obtained the Ledge school, which was near by, and received twelve dollars a month and his board. By teaching and studying in turn, he soon exhausted the resources of Geauga, and began to look about him for greater opportunities for study. He found these in the Eclectic Institute at Hiram, Portage County, a school established by the followers of Alexander Campbell. James Garfield had been attending the Disciples Church, of which the Campbellites were a new sect, ever since he could remember. In his childhood, his mother had walked three miles to church every Sunday on which there was preaching and had taken him and the other children with her. Now the little log schoolhouse was used for preaching on Sundays, and he had joined the church the spring after his illness. To his mother's great delight, he took a keen interest in his religious life. So it was to the Eclectic Institute at Hiram that James turned, to prepare for college.

From the trustees he obtained work as janitor. So well did he perform his duties, and so willing was he to do any one a favor that before the term was far gone the entire school had become interested in this frank and affable youth. When one of the teachers of Science and English became ill, he was chosen, because of his good scholarship, to fill the temporary vacancy. This teaching was so faithfully performed that some of the classes continued under his instruction until he went away to college.

At Hiram, Lucretia Rudolph became associated

with him again, and there their acquaintance began to ripen into a friendship that was to deepen into the faithful love of a lifetime. She was the daughter of a farmer who had come to Ohio from Maryland. His uncle had fought bravely in the Revolution, and the story goes that he afterward went to France and enlisted under Napoleon. Lucretia's mother, Arabella Mason, came from Vermont. Her family was poor, but industrious and ambitious; Lucretia is described as a quiet, thoughtful girl, of singularly sweet, refined disposition, wholly absorbed in her studies and reading. Like James Garfield, this family had moved to Hiram, that Lucretia might have the advantages of higher education. At Hiram she recited in some of Garfield's classes, and the overgrown, bashful youth soon began to discover how sweetly attractive this shy girl was, with her strong, sensible demeanor.

"Her heart was gentle as her face was fair,  
With grace and love and pity dwelling there."

That is how he phrased his sentiments, when he learned that she had always thought him superior; it had been his steady, brilliant leadership of classes that had made an impression upon her, and not his ill-fitting, rough, homespun clothes.

Tradition has it that James Garfield and Lucretia Rudolph were lovers from their first acquaintance at Geauga Seminary, and that when their paths diverged, a correspondence had been kept up between them until they met again at Hiram. But nothing of that is mentioned in Garfield's diary. He records





LUCRETIA RUDOLPH GARFIELD  
*(Mrs. James A. Garfield)*

only that they pursued their studies together, and that their affection for each other was acknowledged before he left Hiram for Williams College.

Garfield was six feet tall when he entered college, and as awkward as he was muscular. Many of the boys at Williams were rich men's sons, and the strapping Ohioan felt himself, to use his own words, a "greeny of the most verdant hue." The homespun of which his mother still made his clothes hung upon him as if the garments had been cut to fit another, and made him a target for sly sarcasms and cool treatment. Had he been a coarser-grained man, the petty indignities would not have annoyed him, but there is evidence of much bitter inward suffering on the part of Garfield, until his courage and scholarship won the admiration of his fellow students.

A classmate, writing of him later, speaks of his warm, social disposition, his fondness for jokes, and his big, wholesome nature, which endeared him to all men. "His morals were as spotless as the stars. I never heard him utter an angry word, or a hasty expression which needed to be recalled: what is more, I never heard a profane or impure word, or indelicate expression from his lips. . . ."

His examination had admitted him to the junior class when he entered Williams, and he graduated after two years with the highest honors, the highest college popularity, and the unreserved confidence and admiration of President Hopkins. Garfield now returned to Hiram as a trained and cultured man. Here were his most intimate and enduring associations. Here, before he went to Williams, he had become the regular preacher at the Campbellite



Church, and he had also begun to make political connections. Over and above all other interest, however, was the fact that here, too, lived Lucretia Rudolph, who, as soon as he was elected instructor in ancient languages at the Eclectic Institute (now Hiram College), became Mrs. Garfield. They began their married life in a humble cottage fronting on the green of the college campus. The activities of Garfield soon became varied enough to occupy two or more ordinary men. He taught with all his heart. He delivered lectures on scientific subjects, learning his science as he went along. He preached for the Disciples in and around Hiram. He kept up an enormous amount of reading, made political speeches, and engaged in debates. He surcharged the college with new life, and soon rose to be its president.

Besides all the other tasks he set himself to accomplish, he took up the study of law, mastered its fundamental principles, and was admitted to practice at Cleveland on a certificate of two years' study. In all these undertakings his young wife was his devoted companion and helper. Every hour that was not taken up with the duties of their small home she spent in libraries, looking up and making notes on the subjects of his lectures. It was the same when he was sent to the Legislature; a fair-haired, gentle-faced woman of unassuming demeanor haunted the State library at Columbus, compiling statistics on all sorts of scientific knowledge.

At the beginning of the Civil War, Garfield offered his services to the Government and was commissioned lieutenant colonel of the Forty-Second Ohio

Volunteers. With his lifelong habit of studying everything he attempted until he thoroughly understood its principles, "he went to war with a book in one hand and a sword in the other," as James Morgan says. Thus mastering the art of military methods, he was able to rise more rapidly than many others. At thirty he was the youngest brigadier in the army; and after the battle of Shiloh, he became chief to General Rosecrans. His regiment did good service in Kentucky under General Buell, but it was at Chickamauga that he won his military glory and for his services was promoted to the rank of major general.

While in the field, General Garfield was elected to Congress, and, at Lincoln's urgent request, resigned his commission and took his seat. He was returned again and again, until in 1880, he was chosen United States Senator from Ohio. That same year, at the Republican Convention meeting in Chicago, he was nominated for President. He is said, by the way, to be the only President who was present at his own nomination. He attended the convention as the pledged supporter of Sherman, and, though usually an able and fervid orator, his speech on this occasion is reported to have been a cold, studied eulogium. At its close, Garfield asked, "What do we want?" There was a pause, followed by the sudden cry, "We want Garfield."

No President owed more to his mother than did Garfield, and none began earlier to pay his debt of gratitude, a debt which he kept on paying faithfully and gratefully to the end of his days. Eliza Ballou Garfield was the first mother to be present at a son's

inauguration, and when he had reverently taken the oath of office, he turned and kissed her.

Lucretia, his wife, was strongly averse to all publicity, since she was of a most reticent, retiring character. It is said that the President often remarked that he never had to excuse any of his wife's words. She was not, however, an extremist like Mrs. Hayes. She did not frown upon the restoration of the billiard table nor upon the glass of wine her husband drank and set before his friends. She was very desirous of fulfilling all the social obligations of her station, and she began with frequent receptions, at which she made a pleasing impression upon all callers. But a very short time after she entered the White House, she fell ill of typhoid fever. Her condition became serious, and a physician was hastily summoned.

Up to this time President Garfield had kept a brave heart in dealing with conflicting political situations that arose at the beginning of his administration, but now he was crushed under the calamity of his wife's dangerous illness. This small, unobtrusive woman had given Garfield mental consolation and support since the ripening of their youthful friendship. The thought of its withdrawal was unbearable to him. He sat beside her bed night and day, devoting himself personally to her care. The papers told of the critical condition of the President's wife, and the people's hearts swelled with sympathy for the suffering husband; but as the balmy days of May came, the doctors announced a slight change for the better. Within another month, Mrs. Garfield was able to be taken to Long Branch, where the

physicians thought the sea breezes would soon accomplish her cure.

On June 27, President Garfield established his wife and their three children, Mollie, Irvin, and Abram, in pleasant rooms at a quiet hotel. He was to return after an important Cabinet meeting, to join them for a planned summer trip. The journey was to include a visit to Williams College, where the President wanted to make arrangements for the admission of his two sons. The Cabinet meeting was a long session, and it was not until the second of July that the President started again for Long Branch. Several members of the Cabinet and one of his sons were to accompany him. Garfield, always buoyant and joyous, was more than usually so on that morning. He expressed a keen satisfaction that relations between himself and his Cabinet were harmonious, and that the administration was a unit. He left his carriage with Mr. Blaine, Secretary of State. The two entered the station arm in arm. A moment later, as they were about to enter the main waiting room, two pistol shots rang out, and the President fell forward to the floor.

Mr. Blaine quickly bent over him and raised his head, as others rushed to his assistance. With tenderness he was placed on a couch and borne to a room on the second floor of the station, where a preliminary examination was made of his wounds. A ball had entered the right side of his back, near the spinal column. When the doctor told him that he had one chance in a hundred, he calmly said: "Then, doctor, we will take that chance." Before he was removed to the White House, his thoughts turned

anxiously to his wife, and he dictated the message that was to be sent to her.

A special express car was placed at Mrs. Garfield's service at Long Branch, and a few hours afterward, when her carriage drove up to the White House door, the suffering President sighed with satisfaction and said, "It is my wife." Another minute and they were together, and there began Mrs. Garfield's long agony of watching her beloved husband go step by step into a martyr's grave.

The dastardly assassin, a half-crazed, disappointed office seeker, who gave his name as Charles Jules Guiteau, was caught in the middle of B Street. He begged to be taken safely to jail. Later Guiteau paid the full penalty of the law he had broken.

On the evening of September 19, 1881, the bells of a hundred cities tolled the sad message that Garfield was dead. Telegraph wires carried the news to a waiting nation, yet the aged mother of the President, sleeping in her daughter's home at Solon, Ohio, was not awakened. The next morning, after breakfast, Mrs. Larrabee, sister of the President, broke the news to her. There was no violent outburst of grief, only the trembling of feeble lips as she asked, "Is it true? God help me! What shall I do?"

"Why was this sent upon me to bear?" escaped from the lips of another heartbroken woman a few hours before morning,—she who had nursed her wounded husband night and day with amazing fortitude. In the days of his youth and poverty, she had made him rich with the wealth of her woman's love; his every struggle for success she had shared, and had encouraged him until he reached the hour of his

triumph. Then she had stood beside him with a pride beyond the power of words to express. But in that last dark period from July 2 to September 19 it was wifely love stripped of all vainglory that ministered to the martyred President, and that supported him as he entered the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

## CHAPTER XXI

### CHESTER ALAN ARTHUR

(1881-1885)

THE twenty-first President of the United States was a Green Mountain boy, but not in the usual sense in which that name is used. "Green Mountain boy," in his case, means only that he was born in Fairfield, Franklin County, on the northwestern side of that beautiful range of mountains which, by their perennial green, give to the State of Vermont its name.

His father was the Reverend William Arthur, who came to this country after graduating from Belfast College in Ireland. He studied law for a brief period when he first landed in America, and then took up the ministry, the calling he had always wished to follow. In 1829 he married a Miss Malvina Stone, whose grandfather was a New Hampshire pioneer; and one year later, on October 5, their first child was born. He was named Chester Alan, after the family doctor, and it is quite possible that there were hopes of this boy becoming a physician himself. But, on growing up, the young man decided on a very different career.

Chester was the eldest of nine children, and while his father was a man of culture, he was no leader of a large and wealthy congregation. This first child was cradled in a small board cottage situated in a pine wood, not far from the little Baptist church where his father preached. A granite monument

now marks the spot in the beautiful, thriving county of Franklin, Vermont, which, in 1830, was mostly a forest, where Indian trails could still be traced.

When Chester was five years old, the Arthurs moved to Greenwich, Washington County. There, at Union Village, his school days began. He inherited the literary tastes of his father, and was remembered by his schoolmates as a merry-hearted, keen-witted chap, with a mania for study. He was but a short time finishing the Union Village school, and then was sent to Schenectady, New York, to prepare for college. There, it is said, he was conspicuous for being able to argue without losing his temper; and it was observed that he was always on the winning side. At fifteen, he entered the sophomore class at Union College, and at once became popular among his associates by joining all the societies and dressing in the best style. Yet he remained an indefatigable student. He taught school for two terms while in college, and was one of six, in a class of one hundred, to be elected to membership in the Phi Beta Kappa society. At eighteen he graduated from college, and went directly to the Ballston Spa Law School. He remained here only a few months, however, before he returned to Lansingburg, where his father then lived. In Lansingburg he continued his law studies while tutoring boys preparing for college. From 1851 to 1853 he was principal of an academy at North Pownal, Vermont—the same school in which James Garfield taught penmanship during his vacation, while he was a student at Williams College.

In these years Arthur had saved up a few hundred dollars, and he now decided to go to New York City.



There he entered the office of Erastus Culver as a law student, and was admitted to the bar before the year was out. Shortly afterward he became a member of the firm of Culver, Parker, and Arthur. Mr. Culver had been an anti-slavery member of Congress from Washington County when Arthur's father was pastor of the Baptist church in Greenwich. The minister was well known to Culver, as he was a man of strong convictions and in no way averse to giving them expression. It was he who, with Gerrit Smith, took part in the meeting that convened at Utica, in October, 1835, to form a New York anti-slavery society. That meeting was broken up by a committee of pro-slavery citizens; but preacher Arthur and others repaired to Smith's home in Peterborough, and there completed the organization. From these associations Chester Arthur naturally formed sentiments of hostility to slavery; and, as a law student, and after his admission to the bar, he was an earnest advocate of freedom for the slaves.

"He practised law in New York City for a quarter of a century without winning any real distinction at the bar," says James Morgan. But he had the entrée to the highest circles of society from his earliest days in the city. A man of tall, graceful figure, handsome, and with the manners of the great world blending in a grave but easy courtesy, Chester Arthur was sought after by ambitious social leaders. However, we have no account of his ever being susceptible to feminine charms until he met Ellen Lewis Herndon, a beautiful Southern girl with a voice that matched the song birds.

Miss Herndon was born at Fredericksburg, Vir-

ginia, and was the daughter of Commander William Lewis Herndon of the United States Navy, who, under orders of the government in 1851, had explored the Amazon River. Her mother was a sister of Lieutenant Maury of scientific fame.

Ellen was just out of her teens when her father perished in a terrific gale at sea, while on his way from Havana to New York. He was commanding the merchant steamer, *Central America*, which was filled with passengers. Under his admirable discipline, all the women and children were safely placed in boats and taken on board a vessel which was lying to for their rescue. It is said that he sent his watch and a message to his wife, but refused to leave his post as long as one person remained on his ship. He went down with the sinking boat. To commemorate his heroism, the officers of the navy placed a monument in the grounds of the Naval Academy at Annapolis; and his native State, Virginia, presented a gold medal to his widow and raised a large sum of money for her benefit.

A year after her father's death, Ellen Herndon made her appearance in the upper circles of New York society. Being distinguished by birth and noted for her beauty and gift of song, she was a central figure wherever she went. Chester Arthur, meeting her at a brilliant social affair, decided at once that she was his ideal of lovely womanhood, and determined to win her for his wife, if possible. Not much is told of this courtship—nothing, in fact, beyond the statement that they were married less than a year later, in the autumn of 1859, at Calvary Episcopal Church in New York City.

Their love proved, however, of the most solid endurance, for in a very short time it survived the severest of tests. The shot at Fort Sumter, which echoed so far, called to arms all their households. Arthur, the bridegroom of eighteen months, immediately offered his services to Governor Morgan, who appointed him quartermaster general of his staff. The Herndons and the Maurys just as promptly shouldered their muskets in the Southern cause.

Such divisions rent asunder families both North and South, as well as in the border States. But in this newly founded home were elements that resisted the forces of division. Arthur's kindliness and courtesy eased the strain, where a different nature might have stretched it to the breaking point; and Mrs. Arthur allowed neither her ardent love for her native State nor her strong sympathy with the principle of secession to overcome the loyalty which she felt was owing to a husband. Love, and a dignified consideration for each other's loyalty and patriotism, kept this divided house from falling, and established it on immovable foundations. The three children, the eldest of whom later died at the age of three, were fortunate in their parents.

In 1878, Mrs. Arthur suffered a great grief in the loss of her mother, who died suddenly while she was traveling in Europe. Mrs. Arthur went to Hyères, France, and brought back the remains. The shock and nervous strain of the long journey impaired her health, and she never fully recovered from it. Two years later she was attacked by pneumonia, and died in the prime of her beautiful womanhood.

Eulogists said of Mrs. Arthur that to win such love

as she won in life, to leave as dear a memory as she left, is the lot of but few mortals. Her glorious voice had ever been ready to serve the cause of charity, and the Mendelssohn Club of New York, with whom she had often joined in benefit performances, begged the privilege of singing at her funeral.

Her husband fondly cherished her memory to the day of his death. He had her room and all her personal belongings kept just as she had left them, even to the needle in some sewing she had been doing when stricken with the illness. To associate her with his Washington life, when he became President, he had a memorial window placed in the church where he worshiped. Her picture hung in the White House, and every day fresh flowers were placed before it by the President's own hands.

But he was not to escape public life in private grieving. General Arthur, who had twice been appointed collector of the port of New York, was sent, a few months after his wife's death, as a delegate-at-large to the Chicago convention that nominated General Garfield for President. The New York delegation at once named Arthur as their preference for Vice-President; and when he came to the White House, after Garfield's assassination, he was still wearing his badge of mourning for his beloved wife.

But Arthur had reached the topmost round of the ladder. He won the good will of the people, whether or not they always approved the methods by which he climbed. His health was not equal to the strain of a second administration. The death of his beautiful Southern wife had left him very lonely; beyond the minor enjoyments of good living, life held no

special compensation, no close companionship. His children were dear to him, but they recalled the loss of the dearer absent one all the more poignantly. He over-indulged, it is said, in eating and drinking, though he was never in any sense a drunkard. He loved good company and "late suppers with a large cold bottle and a small hot bird," says John S. Wise, in his recollections of him. Perhaps as a result, he died of apoplexy two years after he left the White House. His remains were taken to Albany and buried beside the wife whose memory he had honored by some token of remembrance every day of the six years that he outlived her.

## CHAPTER XXII

### GROVER CLEVELAND

(1885-1889, 1893-1897)

It has been said that Grover Cleveland was the Moses whom Destiny hid in the bulrushes that he might lead the Democrats out of their twenty-four years of bondage. No man ever rose more rapidly from obscurity to the Presidency than did Grover Cleveland. At forty-five he was practically unknown outside of Buffalo, and at forty-eight he was in the White House. Yet this man was no winged Mercury in either mind or body. His manners were stolid, and he possessed no brilliant qualities; but he had a character as rugged and immovable as the rocks. It had been built up in a village parsonage by parents who reared a family of nine children and set an example to the community on an income of seldom more than six hundred dollars a year.

Stephen Grover Cleveland, the fifth child of Richard and Ann Neal Cleveland, was born at Caldwell, New Jersey on March 18, 1837, and was named for the late beloved pastor of that place. He was but four years old when his father took over a pastorate in Fayetteville, New York; and there Pastor Cleveland served the people for nine years, while four more children were added to the five he had moved from Caldwell. The strain of maintaining so large a family on so small a salary finally undermined his

health, and when the Home Missionary Society offered him an agency at one thousand dollars a year, he accepted it. This necessitated a change of residence to Clinton, New York. He was, however, unable to benefit by the increase in salary for very long. His health continued to fail, and he had to resign this post for lighter duties. Accordingly, he took a rural pastorate at Holland Patent, where, when he had preached to his small congregation on but three Sundays, death suddenly came to him.

Grover was sixteen years old at this time, and so well supplied with brothers and sisters that immediate self-support was imperative. In the two years his father had spent at Clinton, the boy had worked in a store at Fayetteville, hoping, by this means, to send himself to college. He received fifty dollars for the first year and one hundred for the second, in addition to his board and lodging—the lodging being in a room above the store. This room contained only a pine bed with rope slats, upon which lay the straw tick. Cleveland says of himself and a fellow clerk, “We fairly froze sometimes in winter, as the only heat the room had was from a pipe coming up from the store below. . . .” He rose in those days at five o’clock in summer and at half-past five in winter, and he had to go out to an old pump in the square, used for watering horses, to make his toilet in the trough.

His oldest brother, a minister, was teaching in the New York Institute for the Blind when his father died, and it was very probably through him that Grover obtained a position to teach there also. The sixteen-year-old boy remained a teacher but one



FRANCES FOLSOM CLEVELAND  
(*Mrs. Grover Cleveland*)





year; he saw no future in this work, and he soon returned to Holland Patent. After trying very faithfully to find work near his home, but without success, he finally decided to go west. Cleveland, Ohio, was decided upon, as that town had been named for a kinsman, General Moses Cleveland, which seemed to him to promise good fortune. All that he had ever earned had been generously put into the family sinking fund; so now he was compelled to borrow twenty-five dollars from a friend, to pay the expense of his intended journey. He gave his personal note to his benefactor, promising to pay "when convenient," which was not until twelve years later.

At Buffalo, he stopped for a brief visit with his father's sister, Mrs. Lewis Allen, whose home was at Black Rock on the outskirts of the city. Mr. Allen persuaded him to go no farther. He was a short-horn-cattle breeder, widely known in stock circles through his yearly publication of the *American Herd Book*. He desired to detain Grover to secure his assistance in the preparation of one of his volumes. Since Buffalo was so much nearer Holland Patent and his widowed mother than was Cleveland, Grover accepted his uncle's offer of sixty dollars and a home. His life with the Allens was pleasant, even luxurious; he had much time for visiting his uncle's five-hundred-acre stock farm on Grand Island and for fishing with his cousin, Cleveland Allen. Still, Grover was not content. Circumstances had forced all idea of college from his mind, but he remained resolved to study law; and nothing could quite satisfy him until his uncle secured him a clerkship in the firm of Rogers, Bowen, and Rogers.

This was an old firm that stretched back to Millard Fillmore, who had been a member of it. It is said that upon Cleveland's entering this office, the eldest Roger threw a copy of Blackstone's "Commentaries" on a table, saying, "There's where they all begin." And Cleveland began there. Soon his studious habits, so marked in after years, developed; and it has been often told that on one occasion he became so absorbed in his studies that he did not notice it was time to go home until it became too dark to read. Then he discovered that every one had gone and that he was locked in the office, where he had to remain all night.

Four years of such continuous application prepared him for admission to the New York bar, and four years more he remained with the same firm as managing clerk. He left this congenial post only to accept the call of public service, his colleagues of the Buffalo bar having, without his solicitation, fixed upon him as the best available man for the position of Assistant District Attorney of Erie County.

The District Attorney's health was increasingly failing, and the burdens of the office fell upon the young assistant. These Cleveland bore without shrinking, and by them he proved his capacity for hard work, his legal skill, and his strength of character. This office gave him valuable experience and, at the same time, enabled him to continue to give financial aid to his mother—a duty which he always rejoiced to fulfill. It was this obligation, we are told, which caused him to remain out of service when Lincoln called for troops, and, when he was drafted, to avail himself of the legal right to hire a substitute.

To those who watched his work as Assistant District Attorney, Cleveland's devotion to duty was fully apparent. He was the natural choice of the Democrats in the next election for the office of District Attorney, but was defeated by the Republican candidate. Upon suffering this defeat, he immediately resumed his law practice, now as a partner of Major Isaac K. Vanderpool. Four years later, when Vanderpool resigned, the firm name became Lanning, Cleveland, and Folsom.

He was twenty-eight years old at this time,—a lonely bachelor, but for a few cronies and the members of the Beaver Club, which he organized and of which he was the president throughout its existence. The Beaver Clubhouse was on Beaver Island, adjacent to Grand Island, where his uncle Fred Allen had his stock farm. Judge Albert Haight was a member of this club, as was Mr. Oscar Folsom. The latter frequently brought Mrs. Folsom and his small daughter, Frances, to the clubhouse, where Cleveland and the child of six became great friends. The vivacious little blue-eyed girl would have been quick to maintain against all Buffalo that her "Uncle Cleve," as he had taught her to call him, was a "good mixer" and was in no way lacking either in social instincts or graces, as was claimed by most of the men and women who knew him in those days. He was always a tender companion for this little girl, and she delighted to skip about the island, clinging to his fingers. Cleveland was a frequent visitor to her hospitable home, and there he whiled away many pleasant hours in company with her genial, companionable father.

It was on the way from the Beaver Club that Mr. Folsom lost his life. He was driving from the island, when the wheels of his carriage careened into a ditch, causing him to be thrown out and killed. Mrs. Folsom and Frances were away from home on a visit, and it was Cleveland who met them on their return and did much to lighten their affliction by his tender sympathy and assiduous care for their comfort. Mr. Folsom had made him the administrator of the estate, and in this capacity he won the heart of the thirteen-year-old Frances by allowing her to copy certain legal papers connected with her father's affairs. In fact, it seems that in various ways he had been continually winning her heart since her babyhood. His initial conquest occurred when she was about three, when he presented her with her first doll-carriage. A frisky bull terrier puppy came later, and if anything in the world can win a girl's heart after the doll age, it is a frisky puppy. It is no matter of surprise to the discerning that this lovely girl continued to adore the stocky, keen-eyed man of affairs, who was never too busy to listen to her perplexities or to consider what would give her pleasure.

Meanwhile, the kind family friend was not allowed to remain a mere member of a law firm. Defeats in political elections are not usually the end of political careers. Cleveland's next political office was that of sheriff. Then he was nominated and elected Mayor of Buffalo. The final rung on the ladder of political advancement was not far ahead.

"Being Mayor of Buffalo never would have made Cleveland famous," says Morgan, "but being an

honest mayor of any city at that time, a mayor who had the courage of his honesty, was a distinction." After a few months in this office, where he is said to have saved the city nearly a million dollars by vetoing bad bills, he was elected Governor of New York. There his two years of service for the State were only an enlargement of the splendid work he had done in his mayoralty. When nominated for Governor, he did not have to make a campaign speech; his vetoes spoke for him, and he was elected by the largest plurality in the history of the State up to that time. After the election he wrote a letter to his brother, which reveals a side of the man that he never showed to the public. "I am honest and sincere in my desire to do well, but the question is whether I know enough to accomplish what I desire. . . . If Mother were alive, I should feel much safer. I have always believed that her prayers had much to do with my success."

Early in the summer of that year his mother had died. His sister writes that no one would have supposed that any political ambitions were in the mind of her brother, during the two weeks he spent with his dying mother. The many telegrams and letters that came to him, upon his nomination for Governor, were answered with no apparent concern, and none of the family group were given the slightest hint of the possibility that lay so definitely before him.

Never given to ceremony, Grover Cleveland, accompanied by a friend, walked through the streets of Albany to the State House, to take the oath of office; and to his larger sphere of activity he transferred the same habits of plain living and incessant

labor which had characterized him in lesser positions. With a spacious residence at his disposal, he developed no taste for society; though, as custom required, he threw open the doors of the Executive Mansion for state dinners and receptions, which he regarded, it is said, as a species of penance rather than a diversion. Albany gossipers began at once to make imaginary matches for him with all the eligible women who appeared at his receptions; but the persistent rumor that the pretty widow of his former law partner, Oscar Folsom, would be his choice quite drowned all the rest. It was a well-known fact that her home was the one he always visited on his frequent trips to Buffalo; yet the lovely young college girl of that home never once came in for suspicion.

To Frances Folsom, the schoolgirl, the "veto mayor" of Buffalo who, for the first time, was attracting attention outside of Erie County by his sledge-hammer vetoes, was just her lovable, understanding "Uncle Cleve." She did not see him very often after her father's estate was settled, as she went with her mother to Medina, and attended the high school there. But when he received his nomination for Governor of New York, "Frank," as he always called her, stood with her mother in the crowd behind him. Later she occupied the Governor's box on many public occasions, and flowers from the gubernatorial mansion at Albany adorned her room at Wells College every week; yet even the most curious among her student companions never suspected that such attention was more than the thoughtfulness of a guardian for his ward. She was, however, never his ward by law. Gradually, their relation changed

from the fondness and sincere regard of friendship to the final stage of love.

Long before her college commencement day, however, she had given her consent to become his bride. Both had guarded their happy secret jealously. It had been his wise counsel which had carried her through to her degree; and it had been the flowers that he sent from the White House that brought the sweetest message of love and congratulation, when she won it. Being unable to see him inaugurated as President, she went with her mother, immediately after graduating, to visit him and his sister in the White House. It was in accordance with his wishes that she made the trip to Europe that kept her single for another year.

Cleveland was the second bachelor President to come to the White House, and, as had been the case when Buchanan came, society was eager to know who would preside as mistress of the mansion. Stories of his unsociability had preceded him to Washington, where, it is said, he could not have found his way to the Executive Mansion, had he been left to himself. That really was his first trip to the capital, many say, with the exception of a few hours spent there on legal business on one occasion. Throngs wondered, when, on Inauguration Day, he entered the unfamiliar Senate Chamber with calm self-possession, if the White House, during his term as President, was to be without a hostess. He seemed to be a man who could establish his own precedents. He had come to take the oath of office for President as no other had come, carrying in his pocket a time-worn Bible that his mother had given him when he



left home, a sixteen-year-old boy, to make his own way in the world. On its flyleaf was written: "My son, Stephen Grover Cleveland, from his loving mother." In some manner, the "Stephen" had detached itself from his name during his rapid rise to his present position, but the little Bible had never been misplaced. The clerk of the Supreme Court, before returning it to the President, wrote below his mother's inscription: "Used to administer the oath of office to Grover Cleveland, President of the United States, on the fourth of March, 1885."

Washington society was somewhat relieved when Miss Rose Cleveland, youngest sister of the President, came to preside over the hospitalities of the White House. But as a teacher, lecturer, and authoress, she was far too serious-minded and practical to fit into the fashionable life of the capital. By her own confession, she relieved the boredom of at least one function by conjugating a Greek verb behind her company smile. It was with thankful heart that she welcomed back to America the lovely girl, "the sweetest in the world" she called her, who was to make her brother a happy bridegroom after so many years of bachelorhood.

The wedding was solemnized in the Blue Room of the White House on June 2, 1886. The Rev. Dr. Sunderland officiated, using a ceremony written especially for the occasion, materially revised and condensed by the President. In it the bride promised only "to love . . . honor, comfort, and keep." She had come to her marriage as royal brides come to the houses of their lords, for her grandfather, at whose home she was to have been married, died while

she was crossing the Atlantic Ocean. Therefore Frances Folsom Cleveland added to the historic interest of the White House one of its most brilliant episodes—the first wedding of a President in the Mansion.

The papers made much of the fact that the bridal veil was six yards long, and that the list of guests was unusually short. Only the immediate families of the bridal pair, and the Cabinet members, with their wives, were present. Immediately after the ceremony, the President and his bride left for their honeymoon at Deer Park, in the mountains of Maryland.

Mrs. Cleveland's pictures were published everywhere, but none, it is said, did her justice. The gleam of her beautiful, sapphire eyes and her radiant smile were wanting. She had a tall, girlish figure at the time of her marriage; and there was a girlish delicacy in the pale, transparent skin that was tinged with a roseate hue. Fluffy waves of dark chestnut hair framed the well-moulded brow that stamped her as intellectual. Ammi Farnham, the artist, declared that her mouth was the most beautiful he had ever seen.

Nor was her beauty and charm all that this well-bred girl brought to her high position. Had she been born to the purple and come down through centuries of royal descent, she could not have borne with greater ease, tact, and graceful dignity the burden of social leadership which fell upon her. She was the youngest woman to become the wife of a President, but she soon, by her sweet, womanly ways, became an integral part of the administration. It is

said that she had but to show her gracious presence to capture every heart. She would laughingly turn from politics, only to reproach winebibbers by her own abstinence.

According to most biographers of Cleveland, he was, of all the Presidents, the one who most resented invasion of his private life and suffered most from such invasion. His relations as a husband, and even his children, were made the subject of all manner of atrocious stories, invented by malignant opponents and believed by the credulous, who spread them over the country. Such attacks were too base to be met and parried; a President could hardly protest that he was not a cruel husband, nor the father of children blighted at birth. Cleveland had to endure the torture. It was "something worse than assassination," he once cried out in a circle of friends.

Mrs. Cleveland bore her husband four children,—three daughters and a son. Their second daughter, born on September 9, 1893, six months after Cleveland's inauguration for the second term, was the only child of a President to be born in the White House. The deep tenderness and the great earnestness of this man, the first and only President to be reelected to a second administration after defeat, is seen in some words written to a friend just after the birth of Ruth, his first child: "The house is perfectly quiet, I have been up to find my wife and baby sleeping. . . . I feel I must write to you. And I feel, too, that unless I make an effort, I shall write in a strange fashion. I who have just entered the real world, and see in a small child more of value than anything I have ever called my own. . . ."

And what could express more tenderness than the following letter from his wife, on the occasion of his seventieth birthday? A few days before this event, he had started south on a hunting trip, as an example to the people, in accordance with the suggestion of President Finley of the College of the City of New York, to observe that day as the nation's "out-of-doors-day."

*"Princeton, N. J.*

*"March 15, 1907.*

"MY DEAREST:

"I am so afraid that I will not get your birthday letter to you in time that I suppose it will be a day ahead! And maybe you will reach home anyway and so not get it, but in that case I think I may be able to express my birthday thoughts to you. I hope you will be well on Monday, just as well as you can be, then things will look bright to you and your new year will begin happily. Then I hope you will keep well, and it will go a long, long way toward making your year happy. I hate to have you away on your birthday, but I realize that it will save strain—for many people seem to be thinking of you at this time. We all send much, much love, and all the deepest best wishes of our hearts—my heart is full of gratitude for what the years of your life have meant to me. You know how dearly I love you. You do not mind my saying it over, on any day, and you won't mind it on this especial day—so I repeat it and repeat it, and ask God's blessing on you for all the days.

"Your loving wife

"FRANK."

Mr. Cleveland lived only one more year. His seventy-first birthday found his strength greatly depleted by frequent intestinal attacks, complicated

by a disease of heart and kidneys. "During the last weeks of illness," writes his sister, "he sent to his old home for one of the worn hymn books that were used at family prayers in his boyhood." On the morning of June 24, 1908, he died in his Princeton home, with his beloved wife beside him. His last words were, "I have tried so hard to do right."

## CHAPTER XXIII

### BENJAMIN HARRISON

(1889-1893)

BENJAMIN HARRISON was born on August 20, 1833, and was a slender lad of seven at the time of the notable "Log Cabin and Hard Cider" campaign in which his grandfather, William Henry Harrison, was elected President. Benjamin's father, John Scott Harrison, the third son of the ninth President, was a farmer. To him had been given a portion of the North Bend property, consisting of a neck of land extending five miles below the old home on the Ohio River, at its intersection with the Big Miami. On this land was a simple frame house overlooking the Ohio River, with a view of the Big Miami in the distance. The farm had to be created from the wilderness, like others that dotted the West in that day. Benjamin's father devoted all his time to it, with the exception of a yearly trip to New Orleans on a flatboat loaded with produce of his own raising. He was a good agriculturalist, and this farm yielded bountifully to cultivation. But John Scott Harrison was ever too generous to borrowing neighbors to accumulate any surplus income as a provision for the future. He delighted in the entertainment of strangers as well as of friends, and he could never turn a deaf ear to appeals for assistance. If a neighbor's note fell due and there was no principal to meet

it, Harrison would not hesitate to mortgage a portion of his farm to lend him the money.

Benjamin was the third child of his father's second marriage. His mother was Elizabeth Irwin, daughter of Archibald Irwin of Mercersburg, Pennsylvania. Benjamin was born in his grandfather's home at North Bend, but he grew up on his father's farm. Here, like other farmers' boys, he did plenty of work suitable to his years. In planting time he dropped the seed, pulled weeds from among the young vegetables, and fed the cattle. He frequently assisted the negro cook by carrying in wood and water, that he might win a place in the boat when that admired sportsman went on fishing trips. Benjamin was fond of hunting, too, and the cook knew where and when the most squirrels were to be found in the woods, and just the right season for ducks. Under his guidance, the boy became an expert shot.

He began his schooling early in a little log house his father had built between the river and his home, where he employed a teacher to instruct his children and the boys of his nearest neighbors. John Scott Harrison was determined that his children should have an education. On Sundays, with his father and mother and all the rest of the family, Benjamin attended church at North Bend. Sundays were great days in the childhood of Benjamin Harrison; for, besides seeing so many people at service, there was the dinner under the trees afterward. This was the customary hospitality tendered by his grandfather to the congregation.

The teachers employed by John Scott Harrison for the little log school must have been above the

average, for Benjamin finished a Latin course preparatory to entering an academy at the age of fourteen. He was sent with his elder brother, Irwin, to Cary's Academy at Walnut Hills, a suburb of Cincinnati. After two years as a student at this school, he was transferred to Miami University at Oxford, Ohio. This was one of the earliest, and, for a long time, the leading educational institution west of the Alleghenies.

Benjamin entered the junior class at Miami and immediately attached himself to the Union Literary Society. He was a diligent student, and soon became prominent in the debates of this society. His talent was unmistakable, and in a very short time he was the general selection of the society as leader in all the public debates of the college.

It was, no doubt, this gift of fluency that attracted the fair students of the Oxford Seminary for young ladies, especially the vivacious, intelligent Miss Caroline Lavinia Scott, daughter of the president of the seminary. Otherwise, young Harrison, who was so small of stature as easily to be overlooked, would probably have failed to attract attention. His manners, too, were decidedly diffident, and his clothes were plain and far from fashionable. But his voice was pleasant, and when he was debating a question there was an earnestness in his bluish-gray eyes that attracted one, and gave the stamp of truth to his words.

Harrison liked girls. He had always been able to get along with them better than with boys, as they did not tease him so mercilessly about his towhead and his slight build. Therefore, during this interval



of college toil, though he was devoted to making good as the favorite orator of the Union Literary Society, he was not blind to the attractions of the gentler sex. It is said that he was conspicuously diligent in seeking partners among the seminary girls for lectures, picnics, and parties. Sledding time was his especial delight. During that season his studies were always finished by dark, and starlight would find him on his way to President Scott's house, where the dark-eyed daughter of that home had formed the habit of waiting for him.

Caroline Scott was as witty and intelligent as the expression of her finely chiseled features was beautiful. She is described as possessing an easy, affable manner, and the happy faculty of imparting a sense of comfortable welcome to all who met her. She was talented in music and painting and had a decidedly literary taste. She possessed, in fact, all the attractions that went into the composition of Harrison's ideal of perfect womanhood. Suddenly he ceased to seek partners among the other seminary girls, and became more than content to follow Miss Caroline's lead. He was entranced when he could sit by her father's fire and listen to her music, admire her painting, or discuss with her the fascinations of *Ivanhoe*, *The Talisman*, or *Kenilworth*.

In his second year at college, much wonder began to be expressed by Caroline's schoolmates over Benjamin's change from sociability to slavery to his books; but Caroline could have explained. He had become engaged to her as he emerged from his junior class, and he now had a double incentive to make good in his senior year. For, poor as he was, Ben-

jamin Harrison had faith in the future, and Caroline Scott had faith in him. He graduated from Miami University two months before he reached his nineteenth birthday, resolved to adopt law as his profession.

He realized that he did not have an hour to lose. Poverty and a trustful fiancée were driving him on to work, and he went directly to Cincinnati and entered the office of Storer and Gwynne. During this period he lived at the home of a married sister, Mrs. Eaton, whose husband was a practising physician. Things went well for the next eighteen months, at the end of which time he returned to Oxford and married his sweetheart. Taking his bride to the home of his father, below Cincinnati, he there continued his studies, going frequently to the city for examination at Judge Storer's office. Shortly after his marriage he was admitted to the bar, though he did not reach his majority until five months later.

He had inherited, from an aunt, a lot in Cincinnati, which he turned into cash, amounting to eight hundred dollars. With this amount he went to Indianapolis to establish himself as a lawyer. Unable to take a house and furnish it, he secured board for himself and his wife at the Roll house on the corner of Maryland Street. Here, while waiting for clients, he began to master the Indiana statutes and code of practice, then of recent adoption. He was soon appointed crier of the Federal court, at \$2.50 per day. This was the first money he ever earned.

In the fall of that year, Jonathan W. Gordon, one of the leaders of the Indianapolis bar, who admired and wanted to help young Harrison, called the latter

to his assistance in the prosecution of a criminal trial for burglary. The case came to trial in the afternoon and closed its hearing at night. Harrison had taken ample notes of the evidence, but when referring to them in the dusky courthouse, lighted by tallow candles, he could not make out his closely penciled writing. He faced a dead silence while he shifted the candle on his table and turned his paper about. Finally he became desperate and flung the notes away. Then he discovered that he could think coherently. The very words which would best express his meaning came to him spontaneously. His confidence increased, and soon his voice, sharp and clear, was being heard in the farthest corners of the room. He made an eloquent plea, produced a marked impression, and won the case.

Mrs. Harrison visited her home in Oxford that August, and there Russell, their first child, was born. When she returned in the fall, they gave up their room on Maryland Street and moved into a house. It was a modest little abode of three rooms and a kitchen-shed, but it was a home of their own at last, and the young couple spent many happy days in it. They did all their own work, Harrison helping by sawing the wood and keeping the water buckets filled. He tended the baby, too, while Mrs. Harrison was cooking supper in the evening. He struggled vigorously against getting into debt, and succeeded. But he later stated, in reference to that period of his life: "They were close times, I can tell you. A five-dollar bill was an event."

While living in his first small home, Harrison accepted an offer of partnership with William Wal-

lace, who afterward described him as possessing admirable qualities as a lawyer. "He was quick of apprehension, clear, methodical and logical in his analysis and statement of a case. He possessed a natural faculty for getting the exact truth out of a witness, either by direct or cross examination; and in that respect he had few equals in the profession."

In 1860 he was chosen reporter of the Supreme Court of Indiana on the Republican ticket. This was his first political position. When the Civil War began, he assisted in raising the Seventieth Indiana Regiment of Volunteers, and Governor Morton commissioned him its colonel. He was appointed a deputy reporter for the Supreme Court, but the following autumn, the Democratic State Committee, considering his position as civil officer vacated by military appointment, elected a successor before Harrison's term of office had expired. Their views were sustained by the Supreme Court; but in 1864, while Colonel Harrison was still in the army, the people of Indiana gave their judgment and proved their loyalty by reëlecting him deputy reporter of the Supreme Court.

Harrison served gallantly as colonel of the Seventieth Indiana Regiment, and marched with Sherman to the sea. At the close of the war he went with his old brigade to Washington to take part in the grand review of the armies. There he received the commission of brevet brigadier general before he was mustered out of service. On returning to his home in Indianapolis, he resumed his office as reporter of the Supreme Court, but declined renomination two years later, preferring to devote himself entirely to

his legal practice, in which he rose to a high and prosperous position.

He was defeated in the contest for Governor in 1876. In the presidential campaign of four years later, he worked with his wonted energy and brilliancy and helped not only to turn nearly the entire vote of the State to James Garfield, but to elect a Republican Legislature as well. This event brought General Harrison's name into prominence as a candidate for the United States Senate; and he was nominated by acclamation to fill the place of Joseph E. McDonald. He assumed his senatorial duties on March 4, 1881.

During his six years of senatorial life, he and his family lived in Washington. They took a prominent place in the social life of the capital, and dispensed a modest but well-bred hospitality. Mary Harrison, their second child, was one of the most popular girls of the day. As Mrs. McKee, she lived at the White House and ably assisted her mother in her various social duties, when Mr. Harrison became President eight years later.

Mrs. Harrison, by her knowledge of art and her understanding of household arrangement, made of the White House a handsome and graceful residence. She was, at this time, matronly in figure, yet her finely chiseled features had not in the least coarsened, nor was the beautiful expression of her face other than mellowed by the struggles of her early marriage. Her dark eyes were possibly not so sparkling as in youth, and her dark hair was slightly streaked with gray. Yet she was still of the same easy, affable manner as when a girl; and that fine sense of im-



CAROLINE SCOTT HARRISON  
(*Mrs. Benjamin Harrison*)



parting a comfortable welcome, which had won the heart of her student lover, now lent a special grace to the receptions, dinners, and other social functions of the nation's Mansion.

President Harrison, though small of stature in his youth, was, when he came to the White House, a straight, broad-shouldered figure of soldierly bearing. He has often been called a cold, unapproachable man. "But there was no ground for such a charge," says James P. Boyd, who intimates that it was made only by those who were disappointed over failure to receive favors, or who could not bend him to their purpose. He was known to be devoted to his wife and two children, and his family life was lived on the highest plane. He had never acquired great wealth through the income received from his practice, yet his means had been sufficient to maintain a comfortable, substantial home, which was considered one of the most hospitable in Indianapolis. Rich and poor had found their way to his door and had always been given a most cordial welcome.

Throughout his life he was a consistent member of the Presbyterian church, and for years he held the position of elder. He had labored in the Sunday school of the First Presbyterian Church of Indianapolis, where he taught a large Bible class of young men from all walks of life. In his devotion to religion and to Christian work and charity, General Harrison was unfailingly supported by his wife. Mrs. Harrison had taught the Infant Department of the Sunday school for years before she went to the White House. She had presided, also, over the missionary societies of the church. She was on the



board of managers of the orphan asylum in Indianapolis, and her name is inseparably connected with many charitable and "social uplift" organizations.

While in the White House, President Harrison found his daily escape from the cares of office in the bosom of his family. He joined in all their councils, participated in their public and private entertainments and in their formal receptions. He was also seen with them at whatever places of amusement they attended, as well as at church every Sunday.

It seems particularly sad that the last year of his administration should have been overshadowed and saddened by the illness and death of his beloved wife. He had been nominated for a second term, and just ten weeks before the election, with but a few days' warning, Mrs. Harrison died. Heartbroken over this calamity, his failure to be reëlected had but little effect upon him. He returned to his home in Indianapolis, and completely retired from public life, a life which no longer had charm for him.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### WILLIAM McKINLEY

(1897-1901)

WILLIAM McKINLEY was the seventh of the nine McKinley children. His father, for whom he was named, was manager of a blast furnace until he married farmer Allison's daughter, Nancy, when he acquired an iron foundry of his own.

This combination of tillers of the soil with moulders of iron was a good one, and, no doubt, added much to the strength of character in the children. Nancy Allison McKinley was a strong, rugged woman of very positive character, to whom the neighbors often referred as "peacemaker." She was continually performing some act of kindness—caring for the sick, helping the poor, or extending the hospitality of her home to wayfarers and travelers. Her ancestors, like those of her husband, had come from Scotland, settling first in Pennsylvania and later migrating west.

A year after their marriage, McKinley's parents moved from Fairfield, Ohio, to Niles. The two-story frame house in which William McKinley was born on January 29, 1843, was situated on a corner of the main street of Niles. Part of the lower floor was used as a store. Along with his brothers and sisters, William was taught to help with the household tasks. Their mother's sturdy

Scotch tradition made her a stern disciplinarian, though her children obeyed her wishes more from love than from fear. It is said that Mrs. McKinley and her sister, Mrs. Jacob Reep, ran the Methodist Church at Niles,—“all but the preaching.” They swept the floor, dusted the pews, lighted the candles, and provided food and lodging for the itinerant preachers who came to conduct the services. Charles S. Olcott says of Mrs. McKinley that she was a woman of unusual common sense, who kept her emotions well in reserve; and he relates that she was once on her way to visit her son when the latter was Governor of Ohio, when she was asked by a stranger on the train where she was going. “To Columbus,” she answered. “Do you know any one there?” inquired the stranger. “Yes; I have a son there,” was the unassuming reply.

She was a woman of no education, but a born gentlewoman. She desired, as did her husband, that their children be sent to school and receive every educational advantage that their slender means could afford. William McKinley, the founder, possessed only the rudiments of education himself, and though never prosperous in a large way, he worked hard to enable his family to live in some degree of comfort, and to provide for the children’s schooling. The children attended the school at Niles until William was nine years old, when the family moved to the village of Poland, where a very good academy offered more desirable opportunities for study. This meant a great sacrifice to the children’s father, as his business required him to remain in Niles; yet he accepted the situation cheerfully, and for many

years saw his family only at week-ends, when he rode the long distance on horseback to visit them.

William McKinley has been described by a school-mate as a stout, pleasant-faced boy, who enjoyed playing with other boys and was as zealous at games as he was at his books. After one year of the village school, he entered the Poland Union Seminary; and shortly afterward, when he was but ten years of age, he joined the Methodist Church, which caused his mother to shed tears of joy and to indulge the hope that he might become a candidate for the ministry.

At the seminary, William became associated with boys and girls who enjoyed public speaking, and it was proposed to organize a debating society. The result was "The Everett Literary and Debating Society." McKinley's readiness of speech in after years is said to have come, in large measure, from the training he received while a member of this society. He remained at the seminary until he was seventeen, at which age he entered Allegheny College at Meadville, Pennsylvania. His sojourn there was short, however, as he had to be sent home on account of illness. His intention was to return to college as soon as his health would permit, but he found his father's finances in bad condition. His sister Anna was teaching school, and other members of the family were working; so he decided that in justice to them he must at least earn the money necessary for his future studies. Teaching appealed most to him. Hearing of a vacancy in the Kerr District school, two miles from his home, he applied for the position. The salary was twenty-five dollars a

month and board, but McKinley preferred to walk to and from the school each day. When the school closed for the summer he took a position as clerk in the post office at Poland. There the call to arms found him in June of 1861.

Alexander McClure says that Poland was noted for the integrity and patriotism of its citizens. "No soldier was ever drafted there; every time a call was made, there were more volunteers than the quota of the town required." McKinley was now eighteen. After driving with a cousin to Youngstown to see the first volunteers leave, he returned home for his mother's consent and blessing, then enlisted as a private in the Twenty-third Ohio Volunteer Infantry. The boy soldier displayed sterling qualities that bore him forward by sheer force of merit to a position none had seen promise of in the quiet, slender youth who had left home at the beginning of the war. Four years of strenuous army life brought out and strengthened in him that native disposition to habits of discipline, industry, devotion to duty, and good comradeship, which afterward helped him to attain the highest of public stations. Returning to his home at the age of twenty-two, he brought with him his major's commission, signed by President Lincoln: "For gallant and meritorious service at the battles of Opequan, Cedar Creek, and Fisher's Hill."

Upon the advice of his father, the young soldier, on his return, took up the study of law and entered the office of Glidden and Wilson at Youngstown, Ohio. Later he attended law school in Albany, New York, and was admitted to the bar in March, 1867,

at Warren, Ohio. Urged by his sister Anna, he settled in Canton, where she had been teaching. She had saved enough of her earnings to buy a home there, and she had persuaded her parents to accept it, that they might all live together. It was in that home that the last happy years of McKinley's parents were spent.

Canton was the county seat of Stark County and was not far from McKinley's boyhood home. While it was a small town, boasting some five thousand inhabitants, it no doubt seemed a thriving, bustling place to the young man who had been reared in a village. Then, too, there was his eldest sister, Anna, who, by her merit as an instructor and by her estimable character as a woman, had won the good will and respect of the people. The young major became a marked man from the first. It was not long before he was recognized by Canton's most honored citizens as a man of steady application, readiness of speech, and power of argument. "There was something about his manner, his dress, his carriage, that arrested attention," says Olcott, "and people who passed him in the street would ask the first acquaintance who he was." Naturally, all doors swung open with a welcome to him; yet none more hospitably than that of James Saxton, the father of the lovely Ida.

The Saxtons had long been the leading people of the town. Ida's grandfather, the first Saxton to live in Ohio, brought to Canton one of the first printing presses in the State. He founded the *Canton Ohio Repository*, which became the chief journal of the town, and of which he was editor for fifty-five years.

His eldest son, James, became a banker, and, inheriting his father's strength of character, rose to a position of wealth and prominence. He married Miss Kate Dewalt, whose parents were also among the earliest settlers in Canton. Their home became one of the most attractive social centers in the community, especially in 1870, when their two daughters, Mary and Ida, returned from Europe, where they had traveled for seven months after their school days were over.

Major McKinley had met Ida Saxton when she was a vivacious, blue-eyed schoolgirl. It was just after he had returned from the army, when he was on a visit to his sister Anna. They went on a picnic to Meyers' Lake, a favorite pleasure resort for young people, two miles out of Canton. McKinley was so shy that their acquaintance did not proceed very far at that time, though the expressive blue eyes and almost transparent complexion of the girl with the golden curls lingered in his memory. So, when she returned from Europe and took her place at once as a natural leader of the young people in the unostentatious society of her native town, the rising young lawyer and recently elected District Attorney of Stark County was keen to renew his acquaintance.

In the three years that McKinley had been in Canton, Ida Saxton had been attending private schools for postgraduate work. When she completed her course in public school, she went first to Delhi, New York, where she studied under the direction of Miss Betty Cowles. Later she went to Cleveland, and finally to Brook Hall Seminary, in Media, Pennsylvania. During this time McKinley had fought



IDA SAXTON MCKINLEY  
(*Mrs. William McKinley*)





against McSweeney, then considered one of the most brilliant lawyers of the Ohio bar, and had won his case. Feeling himself now established, he began to take an interest in local and State politics, and delivered his maiden political speech after his first year in Canton. He was a Republican in principle, for to him Republicanism meant union, freedom, and progress—the causes for which he had already waged a four-year fight. His initial speech was made at New Berlin, Ohio, from the steps of a tavern. While his audience, on that occasion, is said to have been decidedly antagonistic, the logic of his address greatly impressed political leaders. Two years later he was known throughout the country as a forceful speaker. He was rapidly gaining wisdom and experience.

These things, however, did not make “the Major,” as McKinley was most generally known, too grave or too mature. Though he was determined to succeed in law and politics, other matters occupied a part of his thoughts. He enjoyed the company of young people, and they, in turn, found him a most agreeable companion, quite unspoiled by his successes. He was unusually handsome, and his engaging manners made him a welcome visitor in every household. So, when Ida Saxton returned to Canton, he was not long in finding his way to the social center established in her home. Other young men sought this center also, but McKinley had one advantage; by his skill and ability in handling certain legal cases he had won the notice of Ida’s father. James Saxton had once complimented him warmly, and McKinley afterward referred to that occasion

as the proudest moment of his life. Mr. Saxton was considered very particular; peculiar, many said, when he directed that his fashionably educated daughter learn the banking business by becoming cashier in his bank.

Mr. Saxton believed that every girl should win the right kind of husband, but that she should be able to take care of herself in case the right kind of man did not appear. In this idea he was strongly supported by his beautiful young daughter. She is said to have been always busy, even as a child, and, whether at work or at play, to have showed a lively intelligence that commanded attention. Through all the flutter that her presence caused in her father's place of business, Miss Saxton preserved a dignified calm, and became a diligent worker. Quick, accurate, and reliable in all her duties, she gained such knowledge of the banking business as would have qualified her to hold a position in a much larger establishment.

The courtship that began on the part of Major McKinley, soon after Ida Saxton's entrance into business, increased in fervor as the months flew by. They were married in January, 1871. The wedding ceremony was solemnized in the new Presbyterian Church of Canton. Miss Saxton was a teacher in the Sunday school, and her marriage was the first to take place in the new church. Abner McKinley, the groom's youngest brother, was best man, and Mary Saxton, the bride's sister, was bridesmaid. The usual secret flight was made. They visited New York and several other eastern cities on their wedding trip, after which they returned to Canton and

began housekeeping in the home which the bride's father presented them as a wedding gift. It was one of the finest houses in the town; and it was from that "honeymoon" dwelling that McKinley made his famous "front porch" speeches, in his campaign for the Presidency, twenty-five years later.

In the first year of McKinley's marriage, he was defeated in his quest for a second term as District Attorney, but it seemed that he gained more than he lost by this defeat. His growing reputation as a speaker brought him into the front rank of his party, and his next political step was toward a much higher goal. In 1876 he was elected a member of the House of Representatives, and for fourteen years he represented the Congressional district of which his county was a part. He was not reëlected in 1890, principally because his district had materially changed. But he was elected Governor of Ohio the following year; and after his second election as Governor, he was nominated for President by the national convention of his party at St. Louis, on June 18, 1896.

During these years, the vivacious young woman whom McKinley had married had become an invalid. In their "honeymoon" house, where they celebrated their silver anniversary the January before he was nominated for President, sorrow had tempered their happiness just three short years after marriage. But it had served only to rivet more tightly the bands of their love.

The cause of Mrs. McKinley's illness was a series of shocks. On Christmas Day, after eleven months of wedded happiness, a little daughter was born.

She was given the name of Katharine, in honor of Mrs. McKinley's mother. Two years later, in the month of April, when the second child was expected, her dearly loved mother died. Mrs. McKinley's grief over the death of her mother so weakened her condition that the birth of the second child had a very ill effect on her nervous system. This baby was also a little girl, to whom was given the name of Ida, after her mother. Mrs. McKinley might have recovered her health entirely in time, had not little Ida died before she was quite five months old. Then, three years later, the final blow fell when death came to six-year-old Katie, as Katharine was called. The mind and body of the already bereaved mother, endeavoring to grope her way back to health, fell to such a low ebb under this calamity that there was but small hope of her life. With infinite love and patience, however, her devoted husband nursed her back to the uncertain strength which was all she was ever to know. There was never a moment in McKinley's subsequent career when his mind was wholly free from anxiety concerning his wife, nor one when she was not the object of his tenderest solicitude.

Ever afterwards, although he could not know when one of her frequent nervous attacks would occur, he made her his constant companion on his travels: Once, while he was in Congress, the physicians gave up hope of saving her; but his own ministrations, through a long night at her bedside, recalled her to life. James Morgan states that during McKinley's term as Governor he never entered the State Capitol in the morning without turning to lift his hat in a smiling farewell to Mrs. McKinley, in her hotel win-

dow across the street. Also, we are told, he would leave his chair every afternoon on the stroke of three, no matter how weighty the business in hand, to step to a window of the executive chamber and wave his handkerchief in greeting to his watching wife.

The death of the President's mother early in his term, and the grave situation resulting from the war with Spain, temporarily suppressed festivities at the White House while Mrs. McKinley was its mistress; and, at the few public functions over which she presided, she received her guests seated. Yet, of the many "Ladies of the White House," few are said to have equaled her in personal attractiveness. "To the President's last day he was not only a careful husband, but a tender, devoted lover," says Charles Morris, "and his deep sympathy and heartbreaking grief during her severe illness in California just before his assassination endeared him more to the people than almost any other act of his life."

Reëlected by the largest plurality on record up to that time, McKinley entered his second term with his party united behind him, and with the good will of even his political opponents, only to meet the tragic fate that had befallen two of his honored predecessors. He was stricken down after having served six months of his second term.

On Friday, September 6, 1901, President McKinley was holding a reception in the Temple of Music at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York. He was approached by a young man whose right hand was wrapped in a handkerchief. From that ambush, two shots were fired into the Execu-

tive's body. The assassin, Leon F. Czolgosz, was a native-born American who had fallen an easy prey to the wild doctrine of nihilism.

The wounded President was caught and supported by anxious assistants. "Am I shot?" were his first words, as he staggered backward; then the ruling passions of his life—kindness to all and devotion to his wife—triumphed over his pain. "Don't let them hurt him," he said, as he saw his assailant struck by excited men; and in the next instant he whispered to his private secretary, "My wife—be careful, Cor-telyou, how you tell her—oh, be careful!"

An immediate operation in the Emergency Hospital of the Exposition was decided upon. It was found that one bullet had grazed the left breast, causing only a slight wound. But the second had entered the abdomen. When the surgeons had finished their work, McKinley was removed as early as possible to the residence of his Buffalo host, John G. Milburn.

Mrs. McKinley had been told as gently as such news could be imparted. She bore the shock with remarkable fortitude. She remained constantly by her husband's bedside for the next six days. During this period the President seemed to make such steady progress that the physicians announced that he was out of danger. Nor did she leave him when the turn for the worse came. As long as he could move his arm it was placed about the frail wife who kneeled at his bedside and murmured piteously, "I want to go, too; I want to go, too." His last words were, "It is God's way. His will, not ours, be done." Previously, he had recited the words of his

favorite hymn, " Nearer, My God, to Thee " ; and a mighty echoing chorus arose from the altars of the nation as the body of McKinley was carried to the Capitol in Washington and thence to its resting place on a green hill at Canton.

With the sympathy of a sorrowing nation, Mrs. McKinley returned to her old home and mourned her beloved husband to the day of her death, six years later. McKinley will not rank as one of the great Presidents. But the White House has seen no kinder, more compassionate lover.



## CHAPTER XXV

### THEODORE ROOSEVELT

(1901-1909)

No man ever fought harder or more consistently than did Theodore Roosevelt to get the most out of life for himself and for others. From infancy he was afflicted with asthma, which made him physically puny, and for years he could sleep only in a sitting posture. Still his spirit never flagged, his mental activity never wearied. His sister wrote that in spite of his patient suffering as a child, he was always the acknowledged head of the nursery. He initiated all kinds of games and narrated, to the delight of his brother and his sisters, stories of strange and marvelous animal adventure which were quite as vivid, we are told, as Kipling gave to the world a generation later in his "Jungle Book."

His later robust health was due partly to the attention of his devoted parents, but still more to his own determination to be strong. Besides fighting for his breath in childhood, he had to fight for his sight until he was thirteen. Uncertain health put him out of step with his fellows, and he had to struggle to hold his own among hardier boys. He built up his frail body and braced his courage by daily exercise in the small gymnasium his father fitted up for him at his home on East Twentieth

Street, New York City, and in the fields and woods to which he went every summer.

When he was ten, his father took the family to Europe, but none of the children wanted to go; they preferred the country and their pets, especially the pony named General Grant. Theodore cordially hated that trip, he wrote. Picture galleries, historic places, and monuments meant nothing to a boy of his years with the taste of a naturalist. From a diary that he kept, one learns that the photograph of one of his sister's playmates threw him into a fit of depression. Little did the homesick boy suspect that the pictured face was to become the devoted companion and most valued comrade of his mature years.

At fifteen, after a second trip abroad, Theodore was so much improved in health that he set seriously to work to prepare for Harvard College. Up to this time his education had been without either the stimulating effect of companionship or the competition of schoolmates, as, except for a few months at Professor MacMullen's Academy, he had never attended a public or a private school. His aunt, who lived in the Roosevelt home, had directed his early schooling, and his own wide reading and travel had done the rest. He was fortunate, when beginning to prepare for college, in having for a tutor Mr. Arthur H. Cutter, for many years head of the Cutter Preparatory School in New York City. Under his excellent training he was ready to begin his work at Harvard three years later. As a result of this training, Roosevelt's individuality was much more pronounced than was that of the average standardized

product of the large preparatory schools. Bradley Gilman, in his *Happy Warrior*, says that from the first, Roosevelt was a striking figure among his college mates, noticeable for his quick, abrupt ways and for the emphasis he employed in setting forth any point.

Theodore thoroughly enjoyed Harvard. He entered with zest into the college societies as soon as his classmates recognized his mettle and sought his companionship. His unusual ways, his outspokenness, and his almost unbroken good nature attracted most persons with whom he came in contact. His family, which was Knickerbocker on his father's side and Southern on his mother's, "made easy for him the ascent of the social terraces at Harvard—the Dicky, the Hasty Pudding Club, and the Porcelian," says William Roscoe Thayer. In addition, he was editor of the *Harvard Advocate* and rose to be President of the Natural History Society, a distinction which implied real merit.

Mr. Pringle states that Theodore met Miss Alice Lee at the beginning of his junior year. It was in the home of the young girl's cousin, Richard Saltonstall, at Chestnut Hill, the lovely and exclusive settlement of aristocratic families near Harvard. She was the daughter of George Cabot Lee. When Theodore met her she had just turned seventeen, and was not yet introduced to society. He was twenty, and his "overwhelming, gusty vitality" is said to have alarmed the gentle Alice when he precipitated himself into the circle of her less impetuous admirers. But, we are told, if Alice was a little repelled, she was wholly interested; and she could not



ALICE LEE ROOSEVELT  
(*Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt*)



have avoided seeing Roosevelt had she desired, as her cousin was constantly bringing him to the house on week-ends.

It is true that she sometimes discouraged the eager Theodore, which always plunged him into the deepest gloom. We are told that "one night, during the first winter of their courtship, a classmate telegraphed to New York in alarm that Roosevelt was somewhere in the woods near Cambridge and refused to come home. A cousin who was particularly close hurried up there, managed somehow to soothe him, and soon confidence returned and the courtship continued."

As his senior year at college went by, Theodore became "markedly more possessive" toward the lovely Alice. He was a familiar figure in Cambridge and Boston, driving in his dogcart, a sort of sporting phaëton, then the height of style in equipages. He had not taken to horseback riding at that time. He was especially fond of boxing, however, and for the sake of developing himself physically he took regular lessons in that vigorous sport throughout his college career. He insisted that Alice Lee watch from the gymnasium balcony, when he made his bid for the college lightweight championship.

Theodore graduated from Harvard in 1880. The first thing he wished to settle was his marriage. Alice, with her mother, had visited Theodore's mother for the Christmas holidays, and she was highly approved by the family. The blue-eyed, fair-haired girl was much like his own mother in gentle charm and quiet graciousness. Theodore and Alice were married on his twenty-second birthday, Octo-

ber 27, 1880, and went to Europe for their wedding trip.

On their return, they settled in New York. Three possible vocations invited Roosevelt. He was already well along in the writing of his "History of the Naval War of 1812," a most ambitious work, begun in college. It was published two years later and was early recognized as an authority on the subject. It brought from the British authors of the "History of the Royal Navy" a request that he write for them the chapter of their work dealing with that war. So there was the attractive possibility of giving his whole attention to historical or biographical work. There was also the field of political life, with reform aims, in which he had intimated his interest to a friend in college. Last and nearest was his uncle's law office. For a brief period of time he did take up the study of law, and he says in his autobiography that if he had come under the broad influence of Dean Thayer of the Harvard Law School, he might have viewed law differently. But as he faced the profession in his uncle's office, it revolted him. It was at this point that he fully decided to "break into politics," as he expressed it.

Most of Roosevelt's classmates and friends, on hearing of his decision, regarded it only as proof of his eccentricity; yet, less than two years after his graduation from Harvard, he was elected to the Lower House of the New York Legislature, as the youngest member of that body. He was twice re-elected, becoming floor leader in his third term. Notwithstanding this quick success, the ward politicians are said to have wanted none of the "silk

stockings" from the "Avenue," and the gilded youth of Murray Hill snickered at "Teddy" for mixing with "groom and saloon keeper" at headquarters. He retorted that if the people at headquarters were the governing class in New York, he wanted to belong to them; and he remained indifferent to their laughter.

In those years, moreover, many things had happened to Theodore Roosevelt that not only tested the mettle of the robust manhood he had built up, but tried the very fiber of his soul. In February of 1884, death claimed, twelve hours apart, his lovely Southern mother and his beautiful young wife. He learned at Albany that a daughter was born to him on February 12, and that his wife was doing well. It was amidst effusive congratulations that he left the Assembly chamber and started for New York. Mr. Pringle writes that he found his wife barely conscious, and that all that night, save for a few brief moments when he visited the sick room of his mother, he sat at the head of his wife's bed and held her in his arms. At three o'clock in the morning of the 14th, his mother, ill of typhoid fever in the same house, died; and at two o'clock in the afternoon of that day his wife, weakened by Bright's disease, passed away. All that was left to him of his first romance and great domestic happiness was the tiny infant, Alice, his greatest joy and the symbol of his deepest sorrow. Only away from the scenes that were a constant reminder of his double loss could he hope to find solace and courage to carry on.

So, on the blizzard-swept plains of his ranch in North Dakota, he took what has been termed his



“ post-graduate course in physical culture.” There the “ four-eyed tenderfoot ” fought the battle of his youth all over again, in a strange world, with entirely different standards for measuring a man. There he had to make good by working as hard and as bravely as the other ranchers. He showed himself, on occasion, quicker with his fist than a barroom rowdy with a gun. In the end, it is said, the West made over the raw material from Fifth Avenue into an American of the type of Washington, Jackson, and Lincoln,—all frontier men.

During that period, Roosevelt wrote a memorial to the wife to whom he had given all the romantic passion of his first youth. “. . . I loved her as soon as I saw her fair, young face. . . . We spent three years of happiness together such as rarely comes to man and woman. . . . She was beautiful in face and form, and lovelier still in spirit; as a flower she grew, and as a fair young flower she died. Her life had been always in the sunshine; there never came to her a single great sorrow; and none ever knew her who did not love and revere her for her bright, sunny temper and her saintly unselfishness. Fair, pure and joyous as a maiden, loving tender and happy as a young wife; when she became a mother, when her life seemed to be but just begun, and when the years seemed so bright for her—then, by a strange and terrible fate, death came to her. . . .”

The memorial from which the above is taken, Mr. Pringle tells us in *Roosevelt: A Biography*, was printed in a limited edition, and was circulated only among relatives and close friends.

After his return from the West, Roosevelt was nominated by the Republican party for Mayor of New York City. The contest, it is said, was hopeless from the first, and he was defeated; yet it served to pull him back into political life. After the election he went to Europe. In London, on December 2, 1886, he was married to Miss Edith Kermit Carow. He had known Miss Carow since his earliest childhood, and it was her picture that had made him lonely and homesick when he was with his parents in Paris. Cecil Spring-Rice, a friend of long standing, who was afterward British Ambassador at Washington, was his groomsmen. Roosevelt remarked, says Thayer, that being married at St. George's made him feel as if he were living in one of Thackeray's novels.

Mrs. Roosevelt came of Huguenot ancestry, the name being originally Quereau. The first French immigrants of this family had migrated to New York in the seventeenth century, about the same time as Claes van Roosevelt. The Carows, like the Roosevelts, had freely intermarried with the English in America, until the French origin of the name became undiscernible. Mr. and Mrs. Roosevelt spent some months in Europe, returning to New York to settle in the country home which Theodore had built on Sagamore Hill at Oyster Bay, Long Island.

When Harrison was elected, Roosevelt was appointed one of the three Commissioners of the United States Civil Service. He was reappointed by Cleveland, and served until 1895, when he resigned to become Police Commissioner of New York City. After serving as Assistant Secretary of the Navy

under McKinley, he went off to the Cuban front, to lead his Rough Riders in the war with Spain.

In five months he was back from Cuba. James Morgan states that the Republicans of New York were then in such sore need of a good man to pull them through the pending election that they met him at the wharf and humbly laid at his feet the Republican nomination for Governor. "In the governorship," continues Morgan, "he realized the worst fears of Boss Platt—that he harbored, as the Boss naïvely wrote him, 'various altruistic ideas,' and that he was a little loose on the relations of capital and labor, on trust and combinations and . . . the right of a man to run his own business in his own way."

The politicians could find only one thing to do with this reformer; they shunted him on to the side-track of the Vice-Presidency. History proclaims how loudly Roosevelt protested against the nomination which, in spite of himself, flung him upon the tide that swept him into the White House. This was a tide that the political rulers had not foreseen. It thoroughly washed away all their plans, and started up a cyclone such as the White House had never experienced,—a cyclone waving a big stick for recalcitrant politicians and business men who would not obey the law.

Home, to Roosevelt, was the most sacred place on earth, and his family life was as intense as his public life. To wife and children he gave affection without stint, and affection was what he craved most from them and from his nearest friends. He was personally known to more people than perhaps any



EDITH CAROW ROOSEVELT  
*(Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt)*



other President had been, and his quick responsive cordiality made multitudes feel that they were old acquaintances.

Mrs. Roosevelt was called upon to be hostess to a larger number and variety of guests than any other First Lady; and she was generously endowed with that gracious tact of remembering the faces of people whom she had met. She shared her husband's life nobly and beautifully, and was boon companion, as well as the very wise and tender mother, of her step-daughter, Miss Alice Roosevelt, and her own five children. Her marriage to Mr. Roosevelt proved a happy union of hearts and a harmony of temperament, as her chief pleasure was giving to husband and family that bracing companionship that cheers and heartens one for the labors of life. Slender of build, with brown eyes and brown hair, her most beautiful feature was said to be her lovely, expressive mouth. She enjoyed outdoor exercise, and was a finished horsewoman. Riding, driving, or walking with her husband formed a part of each day's occupation, and two hours of the President's time was reserved for that particular recreation, which took precedence over all the other engagements of his busy days.

At Sagamore Hill, while Roosevelt's children were young, he experienced the intense satisfaction of teaching them what his father had taught him. As soon as they were big enough, they had their pets, rode their horses, sailed on the Cove and out into the Sound, played boys' games, and learned, through their father, to observe nature. In the White House, guests might come upon the President crawling

about the entry to his children's rooms with two or more of the youngest riding on his back, or engaging in hilarious pillow fights with them. Three things he required of them: obedience, manliness, and truthfulness, and these he taught them by affection and example rather than by constant correction. His working days were seldom less than fifteen hours long, yet the time set aside for his family was never allowed to be interrupted; and no American family was ever more wholly united. They did everything together, and the children knew no better fun than to accompany their parents about. There were dozens of cousins and neighbors who often went with them, always delighted to have Mr. Roosevelt as leader.

One might go on writing to the end of time about this many-sided man, who, by his enormous energy, filled the years of his life with more real work for the good of humanity and for the uplift of American ideals than did almost any other. In his autobiography he wrote that "the greatest privilege and the greatest duty for any man or woman is to be happily married, and that no other form of success or service, for either man or woman, can be wisely accepted as a substitute or alternative." And to men and women of all time, he left the high joy and spiritual quality of romance untainted.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT

(1909-1913)

IN her *Recollections of Full Years*, Mrs. Taft states that she did not meet her future husband until she was eighteen years old. This was stranger than it sounds, for they were both born and bred in the same city, their fathers were warm friends and practised law at the same bar for more than forty years, and their mothers often exchanged visits.

The Tafts lived at Mt. Auburn, a suburb of Cincinnati, and the Herrons lived in the old residential section of the city on Pike Street, in the East End. Mrs. Taft spent all her early years in Miss Nourse's select school, known in Cincinnati as "The Nursery" for the daughters of the best families; and Will Taft, as his associates called him, having graduated from the Woodward High School at sixteen, went to Yale. His father, Judge Alphonso Taft, was made Secretary of War by President Grant about this time. He was later appointed Attorney-General in Grant's Cabinet. So the family were in Washington for most of the time that young Will was in college.

Mr. Taft frankly set out to win honors at Yale, yet it is said that his attention to his studies did not keep him from becoming one of the most popular men in the class. In his senior year he was elected to one of the exclusive secret "senior societies," and at



graduation he ranked second in a class of 121 men. He returned at once to his home and entered the Cincinnati Law School. It was while he was a law student that he met Helen Herron, who afterward became his wife. "At a coasting party one winter's night," she says it was, and describes going with a party of young people to a steep hill in Mt. Auburn, chaperoned by Mrs. Charles Taft and her husband, Will's half brother. Will was there, and when he had been introduced to Helen, he took her down the hill on his bobsled.

Miss Herron was the daughter of John William Herron, a graduate of Miami University, at Oxford, Ohio. He attended college with Benjamin Harrison, and for fifty years he was trustee of that institution and devoted himself to its interests. Her mother was Harriet Collins, who, at seventeen, went to Cincinnati from Lowville, New York, to live with her brother, Judge Collins, a law partner of Mr. Herron. Her father was Eli Collins, a member of Congress from the Lowville district of New York. Mrs. Taft writes that her mother was a remarkable and attractive woman, possessing keen wit as well as a mind alert to the humor of every situation; all of which her daughter Helen, the fourth child in her family of eleven, inherited to a striking degree.

At Miss Nourse's school, Helen specialized in language and literature, and devoted part of her spare time to the study of music. "I practised my scales with such persistence that I wonder the whole neighborhood did not rebel," she writes. She insists that the only incident of her early girlhood which was in any way unusual was a visit to the White House as

a guest of President and Mrs. Hayes. Mr. Hayes was, at one time, a member of her father's law firm. Her youngest sister was born soon after Hayes's election to the Presidency. She was named Lucy Hayes Herron, after the President's wife, and had been taken to the White House for her christening. Helen was seventeen at the time of her visit, and says that she found Washington enchanting, particularly the White House.

During the winter in which she met Mr. Taft, she was the vivacious leader of a small circle who went in for amateur theatricals. Their histrionic career was launched with "She Stoops to Conquer," presented in the home of one of the members. Their next performance, "A Scrap of Paper," was given in Mrs. Charles Taft's drawing-room, and Helen and Will Taft both had parts in the play. In connection with theatricals, Mrs. Taft writes of remembering her husband, always a large man, in a golden wig as "The Sleeping Beauty." His brother Horace, six feet four in his stockings, shared the honors of the evening as a most dainty Puck.

While Judge Taft was American Minister at Vienna, and later at St. Petersburg, young William went abroad to visit his parents. It was at that time that Helen Herron and her companions became very serious-minded, and decided that they had spent enough time in the frivolities of dancing and amateur theatricals. Accordingly, she secured a position as teacher and taught for two years; later, with two of her most intimate friends, she decided to start a "salon." They planned to receive company, and to engage in what they considered brilliant discus-

sions of intellectual and economic topics. Their gatherings included only specially invited guests. Among these were Will Taft and his brother, Horace.

Miss Herron and Mr. Taft became engaged in May, 1885, and were married in June of the following year. They went to Europe on their wedding journey, which was the young bride's first taste of foreign travel. The trip was full of interest for them both. They spent the greater part of the summer in England, seeing London and the cathedral towns. Then they went through Holland on their way to Paris. In Amsterdam they purchased some old Delft plates. They were rather large, and would not go into any trunk that they had; so Mrs. Taft had them packed very carefully in a wicker basket, which became a part of their hand luggage. She says that these plates were the cause of a disagreement between her and her husband, concerning the true object of travel. He used to declare that he toted the plates all around Europe, only to have them arrive in Cincinnati in hundreds of pieces. "Which was true; I trusted the basket to an expressman in New York, with the result Mr. Taft described. An accomplished porcelain-mender put a sufficient number of the pieces together to make what my husband always referred to as 'the memento of our first unpleasantness.'"

Six years before his marriage, when Mr. Taft had graduated from the Cincinnati Law School, he had shared first honors with one other. It is interesting to note that years later Robert, his eldest son, graduated from the Harvard Law School with the highest honors ever awarded by that institution. The breed told.

Mr. Taft did not enter immediately on the practice of law, when admitted to the bar. For a time he became law reporter on the *Cincinnati Times*, which was owned by his half brother, Charles Phelps Taft. As a son of Judge Alphonso Taft, and a younger brother of one of the leading Cincinnati newspaper owners, he was, almost from the day of his admission to practice, under the watchful eyes of the Republican party managers. Still, it was his demonstrated ability that brought him such rapid advancement and was responsible for his appointment to the bench of the Ohio Supreme Court before he was quite thirty. One evening, less than a year after their marriage, Mrs. Taft had observed her husband's studied unconcern as he came home, and knew that he had something to tell her.

"Nellie, what would you think if I should be appointed a Judge of the Supreme Court?" he asked.

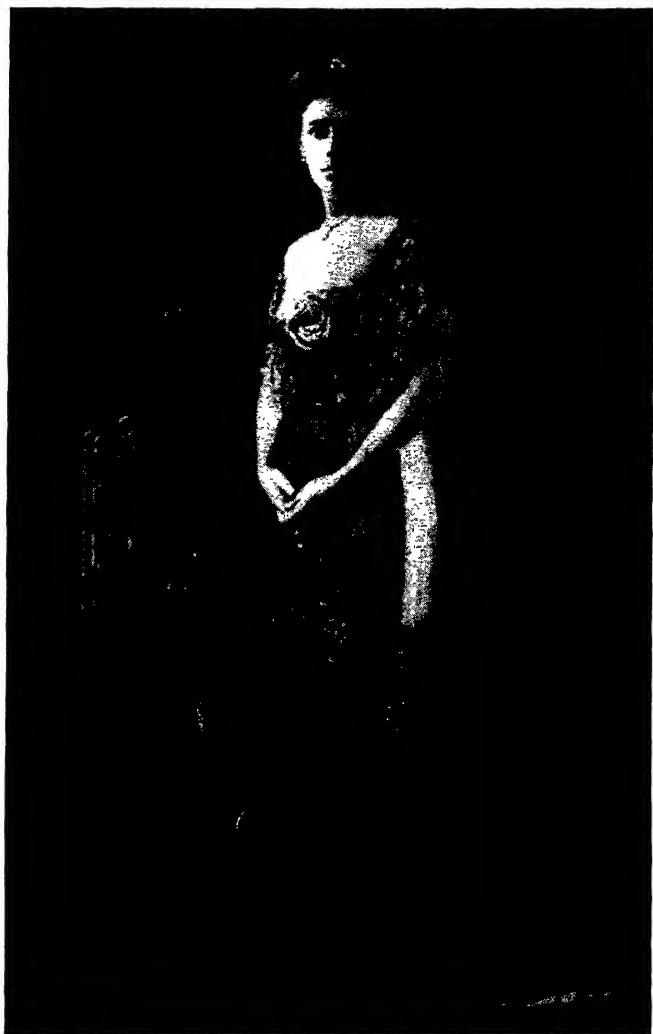
"Oh, don't be funny!" she exclaimed. "That's perfectly impossible."

But it was not impossible, as he soon convinced her. In the six years since his graduation from Law School he had already served as assistant prosecutor of Hamilton County, and he was now collector of internal revenue and assistant solicitor. His wife was at first overjoyed at Governor Foraker's appointment; but later, she began to feel that perhaps it was not a matter for congratulation. She saw her husband associated with men many years older than he. He seemed to take on a maturity and sedateness quite out of keeping with his youth. She dreaded to see him settling for good in the judiciary and missing all the youthful enthusiasms and exhilarating

difficulties which a more general contact with the world would give him. He, however, did not share her feeling in the least. He welcomed the appointment as the beginning of the very career he wanted. After serving the interim of fourteen months made possible by the retirement of Judge Harmon, he became a candidate for the office and was elected for a five-year term. This was the only elective office that Mr. Taft ever held, until he became President.

His son, Robert, was born two years after he became Judge. Six months later, to Mrs. Taft's delight, President Harrison appointed her husband Solicitor-General of the United States. "With a few regretful glances at his beloved bench," she says, "he accepted the appointment." Two weeks later, she and baby Robert joined him in Washington. They went to live on Dupont Circle, where, Mrs. Taft remarks, they sometimes found life amusing and sometimes exciting, but, on the whole, one of quiet routine. During her second, and last, year in Washington, her daughter, Helen, was born. With two babies to care for, she had little time for social affairs.

In March, 1892, Mr. Taft was appointed to the bench of the Federal Circuit which included parts of Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Michigan. The family now returned to Cincinnati. There Mrs. Taft became interested in a number of civic movements, and was the organizer and manager of the Cincinnati Orchestra Association. Her family was completed by the birth of her third child, Charles, in 1897. Three years later, Mr. Taft received from President McKinley his appointment as chairman of the civil



HELEN HERRON TAFT  
(*Mrs. William Howard Taft*)



commission to investigate conditions in the Philippine Islands. He returned home from Washington, whither he had been summoned by McKinley, and told his wife the news.

“ Want to go ? ” he asked.

“ Yes, of course,” she answered, without a moment’s hesitation. She was not sure what it meant, she said, but she knew instantly that she did not want to miss a big, novel experience. That was characteristic of Mrs. Taft. She was always ready, at a moment’s notice, to share whatever came to her big, jovial husband, no matter what hardship or discomfort the situation might bring. Nor did it occur to her that it was a task to take her three children on so long a journey. She was surprised, when she joined her husband and the commission in California, that other members of the party had left their children at home, with the exception of one lady who had taken her eldest, a girl in her early teens.

It speaks well for Mr. Taft’s real ability and conscientious labors that, as a result of this commission, civil government was restored in the Philippines on July 4, 1901, and that he became the first civil governor. During the four years he held that office, he not only carried out the work he was sent there to do, but he made himself popular among the American residents and won a high reputation as a colonial administrator. After order was restored, Governor Taft introduced minor civil courts in various parts of the islands, a new system of land records, social statistics, sanitary regulations, common schools with American teachers, and many other improvements.



One of his greatest achievements in this administration was the successful negotiation with Pope Leo XIII for the purchase of friars' lands, vast tracts owned by four Roman Catholic Missionary Orders established in the islands. To complete these negotiations, Governor and Mrs. Taft made a trip to Rome, where Mrs. Taft was received by the Pope.

In the midst of his work in the Philippines, Governor Taft was offered, by President Roosevelt, a place on the United States Supreme Court. This much-coveted honor, as history shows, was put aside by him purely from a sense of duty to his "little brown brothers." A year later, feeling that the progress that had been made in that time permitted his departure, he accepted the position of Secretary of War in President Roosevelt's Cabinet.

Mrs. Taft tells many amusing incidents of her life as a Cabinet lady, the first of which smacks of impertinence. One day a lady said to her, "You know, Mrs. Taft, I have thought about you so often and wondered how you liked it here in Washington after your life in Manila. Why, out there you were really a queen, and you come back and are just nobody." It would be interesting to know Mrs. Taft's reply, but she does not give it. She tells of another lady who sat next to her husband one night at dinner, who possibly thought she was being brilliant when she urged him to visit the Philippine Islands because they were so interesting. "That's right, I should go. And I am going, too, just as soon as I can get away," the Secretary replied to her. Any one who knew the Tafts, either personally or through reading of them, could imagine their merry amusement over this in-

cident. They were "a laughing family," as Mrs. Taft says.

Mr. Taft's next promotion was to the Presidency, and on March 4, 1909, his wife found herself where she had declared, at seventeen, that a husband would have to place her if ever she took one. The lady who had considered her "just nobody" as a Cabinet member's wife, would now have to readjust her ideas. It was given to Mrs. Taft, accustomed as she had become to official entertainment, to achieve a rare reputation as White House hostess. Always devoted to fine music, her receptions and entertainments became proverbial synonyms for delight. Nor were her husband's luncheons and State dinners occasions of inferior preparedness and service. Domesticity was her "long suit," said her family, and while she loved planning and ordering for large functions, she was never once found wanting in the special attention and supervision of her children, or in helpful sympathy and encouragement to her husband.

Her first season, beginning eight days after the President's inauguration, was so crowded that she became ill before it was over, making it often necessary for her sisters to receive for her. Once, her daughter Helen, before her *début*, presided in her place at a dinner given for Prince and Princess Fushimi of Japan. Later, this very self-possessed young lady was to become president of Bryn Mawr College,—the youngest college president, man or woman, in the country. Mrs. Taft improved in health during the summer, and gave two parties for Helen's *début* early in the following winter. At the first party Miss Taft "got all the flowers in Wash-

ington." The second affair was a ball, held a few evenings later, when hundreds of young people filled the East Room and clamored for "just one more dance," as all young people do, even at less brilliant affairs. With the New Year's reception, the entertaining returned to official affairs. The Diplomatic, the Congressional, the Judicial, and other State functions rapidly followed, until the garden party season arrived. Then came the greatest event of Mrs. Taft's four years in the White House, her silver wedding anniversary.

"Twenty-five years married," she says, "and all but a single year spent in public service. I am not going to try to remember how many invitations we issued. I know there were four or five thousand people present and that a more brilliant throng never gathered in this country. It was a night garden party with illumination quite beyond description. Every tree and bush ablaze with myriads of tiny lights, the whole stately mansion was outlined in a bright glow, with strings of bobbing, fantastic lanterns wherever a string would go. The great fountain was playing at its topmost height in every color of the rainbow; while on the gleaming point of the Monument and on the flagpole that held the flag stretched in the breeze from the top of the White House shone the steady gleam of two searchlights. My husband and I received the almost endless line of guests under a large tree midway between the South Portico and the fountain. The entire house was thrown open and was filled with people seeking the refreshment tables in dining-room and vestibule. I have a right to be enthusiastic in memory of that

party, because without enthusiasm it could not have been given."

With the passing of another season, Mrs. Taft's life in the White House came to an end. Through it all, she had enjoyed sharing it with her husband fully as much as she had thought she would enjoy it when she wished for it at seventeen.

Mr. Taft was called a blunderer in politics, but no blunder he ever made was due to lack of brains. He possessed the large mind of a remarkable man. His blunders, says Charles W. Thompson, were from his innocent candor in speech, which came from his frank and unstudied naturalness. After the election of 1912, he went down in history as the best of good losers. He brought to the Presidency an accumulation of knowledge and a breadth of vision acquired by the widest experience and the most intimate acquaintance with problems of this and other nations. But his was essentially the judicial rather than the executive mind, and he was destined to exercise it in pursuits better fitted to his abilities.

On leaving the White House, he accepted an invitation to lecture at Yale College. This led to the Kent professorship of law. During the same year he was elected President of the Bar Association. In 1916, he became chairman of the central committee of the American Red Cross, and was chosen President of the American branch of the League to Enforce Peace. Finally, he was rewarded by President Harding with the highest official honor that has ever fallen to an ex-President, in a post far more desired by him than the Presidency,—the Chief Justiceship of the United States Supreme Court.

From this office, death called him in March, 1930. He was a beloved national figure,—the only man to have been at the head of two of the three departments of the United States Government. His was an honorable close to a public career of more than forty years, shared to the end by his tender, devoted wife, who was ever a stimulating, thoughtful companion, and who, in the eyes of her husband, was responsible for whatever eminence he attained.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### WOODROW WILSON

[(1913-1921)]

It has been asserted that no man with a more scholarly background than Woodrow Wilson possessed ever entered the White House. He was dubbed "the schoolmaster" by his critics, but he was far from being a mere pedant. He was a recognized authority on the fundamentals of the Constitution, and a consummate master of the science of government, through which he hoped to bring to pass his dreams of what government should be—dreams destined never to be realized, but noble dreams, for all the scorn heaped upon him.

He was born in Staunton, Virginia, on December 28, 1856. His birth in the Christmas season might be taken as significant of his self-appointed mission—peace to all nations. He was the fourth child and eldest son of the Reverend Joseph Ruggles Wilson and Jessie Woodrow Wilson. His father was one of the stalwart men of the Southern Presbyterian Church. The General Assembly of that denomination was organized in his church at Augusta, Georgia, in 1861, and Dr. Wilson became its first clerk, an office which he held for thirty-seven years. The President's mother was born in Carlisle, England, of Scotch-Irish ancestry. There a little kirk still stands, it is said, as a memorial to her forebears, who were

notable figures in the Scottish Church. She was the daughter of Dr. Thomas Woodrow, an eminent divine of the Ohio Valley. Her eldest son was christened Thomas Woodrow in honor of her father.

He was known to his playmates as "Tom" and "Tommy," and was even so addressed by his associates until he became a student at Davidson College. There, by some means not quite clear, his boyhood name was eventually lost. His preparatory education began in Augusta, where his father accepted a call to serve the Presbyterian church when Woodrow was two years old. During his preparatory period of study his family moved first to Columbia, South Carolina, and then to Wilmington, North Carolina. Afterward he was a student in four colleges: Davidson, Princeton, the University of Virginia, and Johns Hopkins University. "He studied under many masters, but none so strongly influenced his intellectual development as his father," says his brother-in-law, Dr. Stockton Axson, in a biographical sketch of the President.

To his father's discipline, Woodrow Wilson attributed his ability to speak in what have been called "crystal terms." He stated to a friend on one occasion, that when he was a boy his father would never permit him to blurt things out. If he became excited, in explaining some boyish activity, he was always told to stop and to think what he wanted to say; then he was required to say it correctly. Such training was begun at the tender age of four, he stated, and by the time he reached manhood, speaking with a nicety of expression was a habit with him.

After completing his freshman year at Davidson

College, he became ill and had to return home for a year. He next enrolled at Princeton, graduating four years later in the class of 1879. This change of college at an impressionable age is said to have been most fortunate for Wilson, as it gave him the opportunity to understand the Northern as well as the Southern point of view, and prepared the way for the breadth of sympathy that has been so marked in his historical writings. We are told, however, that it was with no preconceived idea of being an historian that he went north. That he remained Southern by instinct, and intended to merge his fortunes with those of the South, is undisputed. It was with this intent that he took up the study of law and politics at the University of Virginia. There again his health went back on him, and he was forced to give up his college work and return home. He remained there for the next year, reading and building up his impaired constitution. Then, one pleasant day in May, 1882, a wooden sign was observed by pedestrians in Marietta Street, Atlanta. It read:

### RENICK & WILSON

This was the law firm of two youthful followers of Blackstone, who hoped to extract an income from the citizens of the town, while they built a reputation that would attract the attention of the State and of the country at large. Eighteen months of "wearing out the carpet," as Wilson expressed it, convinced these young aspirants that the population of Atlanta had the utmost confidence in the lawyers already established there. Their venture in the legal profes-



sion was a failure, but it had its compensations, at least for one of the partners; for Wilson employed the time in writing his first important book, *Congressional Government*.

Discouraged over not obtaining clients in Atlanta, he gave himself what he called a "two months' vacation," and went to visit an aunt, Mrs. Bones, who lived at Rome, Georgia, a short distance from Atlanta. Here, for the first time in his life, romance showed its alluring face. The story goes that early in his visit he saw Miss Ellen Louise Axson in the church of which her father was pastor. He was so fascinated by this brown-eyed beauty, that he asked his cousin, Miss Jessie Bones, to introduce him to the pretty Rome girl as soon as the service was over. A few days later he went back to Atlanta for his typewriter and returned to Rome to do the copying of his *Congressional Government* in a hardware store largely owned by the Bones family. The attachment between the young people is said to have been very soon observed. Mrs. Bowers, a cousin of Wilson, greatly approved of the friendship. She proposed a picnic for the young people of Miss Axson's acquaintance, at a spring east of Lindale, which forms part of the headwaters of Silver Creek. The crowd was to meet in Mrs. Bowers's home, and they were to travel the distance of eight or nine miles from there in two wagons, with side seats and plenty of straw.

Woodrow and Ellen Lou, as Miss Axson was called by her friends, chose the back of the wagon, that they might dangle their feet over the tailboard. Thus they bumped along the country road for two hours, ob-

livious of either dust or discomfort. At the picnic ground, the lispings of the gentle waters and the droning of the bees among the wild flowers furnished a rhythmic setting for their thoughts of love. It was not long before those two had strayed some distance from the others; and when lunch time came, with the hungry crowd gathering around the well-filled baskets, Mrs. Bowers asked, as if aware of nothing, where Woodrow and Ellen Lou were.

“ I know,” replied one young swain. “ He’s over there in the pasture, cutting a heart on a beech tree.” The laughter that followed this statement might have carried over the greensward to Woodrow and Ellen, but it did not disturb them. They loitered on, searching for four-leaf clovers and playing “ Love me, love me not ” with daisy petals.

Only eleven times, it is said, had Woodrow Wilson and Ellen Axson met before that picnic day, when the important question was asked and the favorable answer given. Then all thoughts of working up a law practice in Atlanta were abandoned. Wilson went immediately to Baltimore and entered upon a two-year graduate course at Johns Hopkins University, where he specialized in history and political economy. The wedding had to wait until he was in a position to support his wife. The bride-to-be was, fortunately for her, a gifted artist, and she now took up the study of art in New York under the best masters.

While Wilson worked at Johns Hopkins for his degree of Doctor of Philosophy, he put every spare moment on the treasured manuscript, *Congressional Government*. The book was given to the world in the

first months of 1885, and it speedily received the high commendation of educational authorities. The publication was followed by offers to the young author, from universities and colleges, of professorships of history and political economy. Wilson accepted a position at Bryn Mawr, in the suburbs of Philadelphia, and wrote to Miss Axson, urging that she give up her art course and immediately become his wife. Her father having died, she did not return to Rome, but went to her grandfather's home in Savannah for her wedding. There, in the house of her birth, she was united in marriage to Woodrow Wilson on June 24, 1885, by her grandfather, long a pastor of the old Independent Presbyterian Church of Savannah. The groom leased a pretty cottage near Bryn Mawr, and a new chapter of life began.

Mrs. Wilson was the daughter of the Reverend Samuel E. Axson, a Presbyterian minister. She had received her education at Shorter College, in Rome, Georgia, where the family had moved soon after her birth in Savannah. Her year's study of painting in New York greatly improved her work as an artist. Her pictures, especially her landscapes, are considered by some to be among the finest products of American art. But it was as wife and mother, we are told, that Mrs. Wilson's talents found their chief outlet. She was an untiring hostess, and the personification of hospitality as it is known in the South. Her home was an unfailing source of inspiration to those who were privileged to enter it.

For the next seven years, Professor Wilson taught in various universities. He did not neglect his studies, and carried on his research work to a greater



ELLEN AXSON WILSON  
(*Mrs. Woodrow Wilson*)



extent than ever. A year after he joined the faculty of Bryn Mawr, he was given his degree of Ph. D. by Johns Hopkins University, which accepted his book, *Congressional Government*, as a thesis. Two years later he received a call to occupy the chair of history and political economy at Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut. There Mrs. Wilson found social obligations increasing, and rapidly became the most popular hostess in Middletown. Cultivated people flocked to her home, and every distinguished visitor to the town made the acquaintance of Professor Wilson.

His second book, *The State*, was published while he was at Middletown. This was another scholarly contribution to the science of government. It soon attracted the same wide attention that its predecessor had enjoyed. Now Wilson began to study actual politics in the making. Yet, while the whole world was interested in his theories, he received no encouragement from professional politicians, who believed him a mere visionary and a dreamer. However, two years after he joined the faculty at Wesleyan University he was called to Princeton, to become Professor of law and politics. Thus, fifteen years after he began his college career, he returned to his Alma Mater as an instructor.

His methods of instruction soon began to win distinction for him at Princeton, and when Dr. Francis L. Patton resigned the presidency, his mantle fell upon Woodrow Wilson. This was a departure from the custom of conservative Princeton, as its presidents had always been chosen from among the most prominent divines in the country, the young Dr.

Wilson being the first layman to occupy the seat of honor. It was his first executive position, but by no means his last, for a few years later he became Governor of New Jersey, and two years afterward was nominated for President of the United States. He was probably the only man to head the nation who had spent twenty or more years studying the powers and duties of the Chief Executive.

Mrs. Wilson brought to the White House all the grace and charm of an accomplished, talented hostess, and was aided by the same qualities in her three lovely daughters. The Executive Mansion was permeated with a beautiful homelike atmosphere. David Lawrence states, in his *True Story of Woodrow Wilson*, that it was in the family life of the great scholar that one saw a side of the man little known to the public. The family was closely knit in ties of kinship. The remotest relatives were always welcome, and their visits were returned. Special occasions were dear to all the family, and Christmas, birthdays, and other holidays were observed by regular celebrations. Their home life was one of uniform happiness, for their hearts were as tender as children's in affection for each member of their family.

They were said, by some, to be exclusive and snobbish. They were, of course, exclusive in that they considered the home sacred; and only those possessed of culture, character, and breeding were urged to stay. But they were not snobbish. They were simply selective of their companions. None of the family regarded the White House as a public institution. It was their temporary home, and no one was in-

vited there to luncheon or to dinner, in the entire eight years of Wilson's administration, in order that a political influence might be exercised; "which is hard to believe," says Lawrence, "but it is true." Official dinners, receptions, musicales, and teas required by official custom were much the same as under previous administrations; but they were as few in number as possible, and were rather formal, polite affairs. The Wilsons were gracious, but they never disclosed the same intimacy on these occasions as on less public ones.

The Wilson girls were brought up in the same puritanical surroundings that their parents had known. Wholesome fun, wit, laughter, and innocent gaiety were indulged in; but auto racing, cigarette smoking, cocktail drinking, or card playing were never tolerated. Music, art, literature, and the drama furnished their entertainment, while church and social work engaged much of their attention. Mrs. Wilson's endeavors to improve housing conditions in Washington, especially among the negroes, earned for her the undying gratitude of the poor of that city. Her death, seventeen months after her husband became President, was deeply mourned by all who knew her.

The death of his wife brought upon Woodrow Wilson a melancholy that is said to have alarmed his physician, who saw in it the symptoms of a settled aberration. His grief had overtaken him in the midst of a torment of conflicting responsibilities. He had not known that his wife's illness was regarded by the physicians as fatal, until a few days before the end. Her quiet influence had always been a pow-



erful factor in his phenomenal success, and its withdrawal by death caused him suffering such as was known only to his family and closest friends. It is said that on the day that she died, she whispered to Dr. Grayson, asking him to promise to take care of her husband. She knew and understood the arduous toil which had been performed by the President, since he went into office, in settling the Legislative upheaval and the Mexican question. She knew, too, that another war problem was demanding his attention. In death, as it had always been in life, her first thought was for him.

After the funeral service in the historic East Room of the White House, Mr. Wilson took his wife's remains back to Rome, Georgia, where their romance had begun, and left her sleeping in Myrtle Hill Cemetery.

Then came a transition period in the life of Woodrow Wilson, which is said to have changed the whole temper of the man. The hardest task that he had ever had was that of facing, alone, the trying problems that beset him in the days of neutrality. In the eight months following Mrs. Wilson's death, the deep seclusion of the White House brought on moods of despondency that the members of his family tried in vain to lighten. He transacted business with the same earnestness, but without zeal or inspiration. At length Dr. Grayson, diagnosing the President's case, suggested that the time had come for the continued silence of the Mansion to be broken by musicales and a moderate social intercourse with the outside world, if the President's health was to be sustained. So guests were invited.

Among them was a charming widow, Mrs. Galt. She had been introduced at the White House a short time before by Dr. Grayson, as a walking companion for Miss Helen Bones, a cousin of the President. Miss Bones lived at the Mansion, and needed such a companion while convalescing from an illness which was probably due to the close confinement she had suffered while nursing Mrs. Wilson. And, though Dr. Grayson was said to have been the means of bringing the President and Mrs. Galt together, Miss Bones is credited with having fostered the ensuing romance, for she had Mrs. Galt at the White House on almost every possible occasion. During the spring following Mrs. Wilson's death, Mrs. Galt was frequently seen in the White House automobile when the President took his daily drives, and she and Miss Bones began to accompany him to the links for his game of golf with Dr. Grayson.

Mrs. Galt was Edith Bolling of Wytheville, Virginia. Her father was a prominent lawyer, who gave his daughter every advantage for cultivating her taste in art and literature. In 1896 she married Mr. Norman Galt and went to Washington, where her charm and graciousness soon won her a place in the social life of the capital, though she seemed to have lived very quietly after her husband's death in 1907. She was a beautiful woman of the brunette type, forty-seven years of age when the President met her; and when he became impressed with the beauty of her character, he urged his suit with all the ardor of a much younger man.

Their wedding took place on December 18, 1915. Its outstanding feature was its extreme privacy and

simplicity. Devoid of all official splendor, it was solemnized in the bride's modest dwelling in Twentieth Street. Fewer than fifty guests were present, all members of the immediate families of the bride and groom, with the exception of a few intimate friends.

Nevertheless, the President's marriage was everywhere discussed, and there was much apprehension in some political quarters as to its effect on the coming campaign of 1916. He was even advised by his private secretary to postpone the announcement of his engagement, when he made it known that he wanted the news given to the public. But it is said that the President cared nothing about the political phase of the situation;—he was in love. Those who knew him best believed that his infatuation for his new wife meant the prolonging of his life and an inspiration to do more and better work. Certainly he proved within the next few years that herculean tasks were not impossible of accomplishment. The coming campaign was a success, and he went back into office in 1917, to become the dominant personality in the greatest crisis the world had known.

[Mrs. Edith Galt Wilson succeeded the President's daughter, Miss Margaret Wilson, as the nation's hostess. Her gracious hospitality is said to have enriched the social life of Washington, while her thoughtfulness and devotion did much to lighten the burdens that weighed down the President. For the United States was soon forced into the World War. Wilson, reëlected because "he kept the country out of war," became the great War President.

Whatever view is held of Wilson's future place in



EDITH BOLLING GALT WILSON  
(*Mrs. Woodrow Wilson*)



history, two things can never be lost sight of: the utter devotion with which the new wife, who shared in his transcendent glory, met his tragic failure to bring the world to accept his ideal of peace, and the love with which she attended him to the somber end. Watched over, supported, guarded by two such devoted women as were Wilson's wives—who will say that any man so attended can be called unblessed?

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### WARREN GAMALIEL HARDING

(1921-1923)

“BABBITT is moving into the White House,” was said at the inauguration of Warren Harding, and Mr. Harding himself stated that he was “just folks.” Yet a more striking example of his kind of “folks” was never displayed in any other inauguration. “The simplest in modern times,” his inauguration was said to be. There was no parade, no inaugural ball, no brilliant celebration. Millions were dying of starvation, millions more were living in dire poverty, and peace on earth was still far off, more than two years after the struggle for it had ended.

Warren Harding was used to work. He had known nothing else all his life. He was born on November 2, 1865, in a little farmhouse at Corsica, Ohio, and work began for him almost as soon as he was out of the cradle. He came of pioneer ancestors, who lived in New England for more than a century before the Declaration of Independence. The great-grandfather of George Tryon Harding, father of the late President, is reputed to have sailed from England for Connecticut in 1823. Years later, some of his descendants were found in the Wyoming Valley of Pennsylvania. After the Indian massacres in that

valley, those Hardings who escaped scalping migrated into Ohio.

It was with the grandfather of Warren Harding that the family history in that State began. Early in the nineteenth century he arrived in Morrow County and set up his cabin near the hamlet of Corsica, now called Blooming Grove. With him he had brought his bride, whose maiden name was Warren. There, in that small cabin on the edge of the new West, a son was born, destined to become the father of a future President. In that same house, years later, the future President was also born, and was named "Warren" for his grandmother. His mother was Phoebe Elizabeth Dickerson. She came of Dutch ancestry, and the blood of the Van Kirk family, pioneers of Pennsylvania, was in her veins.

The Dickersons and the Hardings were neighbors, and the parents of the President were schoolmates and sweethearts in the days before the Civil War. Their devotion met with parental objection because of their youth; but when Tryon Harding returned from his period of service in the Union army, he married his sweetheart, though he was not quite twenty years of age. They went to live at his father's home, and Warren Harding was the first of their eight children. After the birth of his son, the young husband managed by hard work to build a little home of his own. While he supported his family by farming, he read works on medicine in a doctor's office at Caledonia, a town about ten miles east of Marion, Ohio. Later, he was able to attend some lectures; but Warren was a "fair-sized boy" before his father was authorized to practise medicine.



Warren learned his first lessons at his mother's knee. He attended school when he could, as he found it necessary, even when a very young child, to do the chores around the home and to take any job that would enable him to add to the family income. He went to school at Corsica and in Caledonia. Recounting his early experiences, Mr. Harding spoke of the latter place as the town where he first got printer's ink on his fingers. "I was 'devil,' as print-shop apprentices are known, in the office of the Caledonia *Argus*, and learned to stick type, feed press, make up forms, and wash rollers." He also played a horn in the Caledonia Cornet Band and took an active part in all boyish sports, becoming leader of his "gang" in the town. His first real money-earning venture came when he was fourteen, when his father turned over half an acre of land to him, giving him the wheat with which to plant it. His crop is said to have been eighteen bushels, for which he was paid eighteen dollars by a warehouse man at the neighboring village of Climax. Upon receipt of this sum, "he was," said his father, "happy as a big sunflower."

With this money the rawboned, gawky lad of fourteen started himself at college—a pretentious name given the Baptist academy at Iberia, long since dropped from the official register of educational institutions in the State. For a time, however, the old Ohio Central College enjoyed a creditable standing, and offered beneficent opportunities to such students as Warren Harding, who had to work his way through. He matriculated for an academic course and graduated at seventeen with a Bachelor of

Science degree. All his vacations were devoted to earning money, that he might remain at the college. During these years he helped to clear and cultivate the land, felled trees, and split rails, even as Abraham Lincoln and many another American lad had done. He started painting barns one summer, and is credited with having acquired such a reputation that he and a chum formed a partnership and "literally painted the county red." Mr. Thomas H. Russell says, in his biography of Harding, that when the Toledo and Ohio Central Railroad was being built about a mile from the Harding place, Warren "hired out" to haul dirt for the railroad. For recreation he played an alto horn in the Iberia brass band. His old friends recall him as the most friendly chap in the school. "They say he could swim farther and dive deeper than any of his chums. . . . And he played baseball, too, with average success," states Johnson.

When he graduated he did not at once go into newspaper work, though the love of printer's ink was in his blood. Like many another youth who became President, he started his upward climb by teaching school, which, he afterward stated, was the hardest work he ever performed.

The following year, when Warren was nineteen, his family moved to Marion. After trying to sell insurance for a while, he obtained a position on the *Marion Democratic Mirror*. This work as a reporter, at a dollar a week, with the promise of more when the next opening came, was short-lived, as Warren Harding was a "dyed-in-the-wool" Republican. It ended while the presidential battle between James G.

Blaine and Grover Cleveland was gripping the country. But his urge to become a newspaper man by that time was so great that he decided to start a paper of his own. So he borrowed three hundred dollars from his father, and, with one of his boyhood friends, bought the *Marion Star*, a paper about to pass out of existence because the owner had neither the money nor the ability to keep it going.

He was now well launched on his career. Soon the newspaper business became a consuming passion with him. He learned everything pertaining to the publication of his paper, even to the minutest detail of the mechanical equipment. It has been told that once, while Harding was a senator, a friend entered the *Star* office one New Year's morning and found him making up a form.

"You're a great senator!" was his friend's greeting.

"I would be a great senator," replied Harding, "if I didn't know anything else. You see, this is a holiday and we want to go to press as early as possible and let the boys get out and have a good time; so I'm just lending a helping hand." That was Mr. Harding always. From his earliest days he was willing to lend a helping hand whenever he could. He was a man of abounding optimism, practical knowledge, and infinite tact; and with these qualities he won his way to the topmost round of the ladder of success.

We are not told when or how Mr. Harding met his wife. But we know that their love was strong enough to culminate in their union in spite of the opposition of Mrs. Harding's father, who was Amos Kling, a



FLORENCE KLING HARDING  
(*Mrs. Warren G. Harding*)



successful banker and the richest man in Marion. He had migrated to Ohio from Pennsylvania many years previous to the birth of his daughter Florence, and had been one of the first settlers in that part of the State. Two sons were born to him, and he wished that the little girl who was his third child had also been a boy; yet he satisfied himself by bringing her up more like a boy than a girl. She loved horses, dogs, and all outdoor life; and she was taught directness of purpose, alertness of mind, and thrift in business. "In her early teens when she had to leave school on account of threatened loss of eyesight, she became her father's chief director and friend. She rode horseback with 'Dad,' traveled about with him and made up to him in every way she could for the lack of her mother's companionship, Mrs. Kling having been more or less an invalid for many years," says Mr. Russell.

Miss Kling grew up to be a popular and attractive girl, generally sought by marriageable young men. It was also discovered that she possessed considerable musical talent, so her father permitted her to go to Cincinnati to take piano lessons at the Conservatory of Music. For three years, she often practised about seven hours a day at her piano. Many of the young people of Marion owed all their knowledge of music to her instruction. She was first married at the age of eighteen, but she soon became widowed, and returned to her father's home with one small son. It was then decided that she was to become a musical celebrity, and her father was willing to furnish her with every means to that end. But then came Warren Harding, the handsome young news-

paper editor, and the lovely widow found a kindred spirit such as she had never known. Her father recognized an obstacle in her path to musical success, and he determined to remove the obstacle by refusing his consent to her second marriage. This was a matter of regret to Florence, but it was not one to keep her from happiness; for she married Warren Harding on July 8, 1891, without her father's consent, and in all their married life she proved the most helpful and loving of companions.

Mr. Harding had mortgaged his business heavily, so that he might become sole owner of the *Star*, and he was greatly concerned, at the time of his marriage, as to its success. His wife cheerfully threw all her energy and keen intelligence into the undertaking and helped to build a thriving newspaper. She took charge of the circulation and advertising departments, and made them pay. We are told that on many days she stood by the press and directed the carriers' routes. On one occasion, she spanked a youngster who had playfully tampered with one of the presses; yet the welfare of each one of those boys was her daily concern.

Mr. Russell quotes Mrs. Harding as saying that she went to the *Star* office to help out for several days, and remained fourteen years. She started the carrier system, she states, and the boys she employed all grew up to be splendid men. One red-headed youngster to whom she and Mr. Harding took a special fancy was Orrie Baldinger, afterward Major Baldinger, United States Air Service. He was later a White House aid, and accompanied President and Mrs. Harding on their Alaska journey. Another

one of those newsboys, George Christian, became private secretary to the late President.

When Mr. Harding became active in the local politics of Ohio, his wife entered into the contest with no less earnestness than did he. She took up the study of politics with the same vigor which she had applied to mastering the details of the newspaper business, that she might become an intelligent and helpful assistant to him. Mr. Harding's father-in-law, who, in time, became reconciled to the marriage, is said to have repeatedly urged his son-in-law to give up politics, but Mrs. Harding just as strongly urged that he keep to his political course. "Probably his greatest asset, outside his own personality, was his wife's faith in him," says William Johnson.

In 1900 he became State Senator, and in 1904 Lieutenant Governor of Ohio. Ten years later he was elected to the Senate of the United States. During his first year in that body he was a diligent worker on various committees. He made no attempt to make himself conspicuous on the floor, but fate had ordained otherwise. His large figure and handsome face attracted the attention of visitors in the galleries, and his pleasing voice and impressive manner commanded, for his speeches, a respect that was sometimes not given to those of older and better-known men. Moreover, he was personally liked by political foes as well as by friends. His clear, logical mind and his vast fund of practical common sense caused him to become more and more regarded as an adviser and a leader. By the middle of his second term he was recognized as one of the most influential members of the Senate. His membership in the



Committee on Foreign Affairs made him a marked man in all debate over the World War issues, which, incidentally, gave him an admirable preparation for the Presidency. The presidential nomination for Senator Harding was suggested by Harry M. Daugherty in the fall of 1919, and in December of that year Mr. Harding publicly consented to be considered a candidate in the next year's election for President.

In July, 1920, Warren Gamaliel Harding was notified at Marion, Ohio, that he had been nominated for the office of Chief Executive by the Republican party. A born conciliator, Mr. Harding sedulously refrained, during his entire campaign and in the trying interval between election and inauguration, from any act or speech that might have been the cause of hostility or friction. Not many times has a President come to his task with so great a fund of popular good will, or with so many wishes for his success. His first official act after his election was to have the big gates to the White House grounds opened, as a mark of welcome to all.

As First Lady, Mrs. Harding continued to share with her husband the tasks that fell to the Chief Executive. She soon renewed the social life of the White House, which had been abandoned because of the illness of President Wilson. Her first large entertainment consisted of three garden parties, given early in the summer of 1921. The New Year's Day reception of 1922 is well remembered, for Mrs. Harding displayed the courage of a martyr by standing with the President from eleven in the morning until five in the afternoon, greeting and shaking

hands with seven thousand people. A resident of Washington says that when she finally did retire to her room an attendant had to cut the glove from her swollen hand.

She entered into welfare work and devoted a portion of her time to a study of the public school system. The Girl Scouts and the Camp Fire Girls knew her as a leader of winning manner and much sympathy. Her simplicity and directness appealed to youth and, though her opinions were strong and she freely expressed them, she was always careful not to offend.

Elected to the Presidency on his fifty-fifth birthday, Harding brought to his high office an infinite patience and kindness in dealing with public questions and with men. Thomas Russell states that whatever else historians may say of him, there probably will be little dispute that few Chief Executives came to office in time of peace, facing problems more complex in their nature or greater in number. International affairs were unbalanced as never before, with many principal war settlements still to be effected. At home the work of reconstruction had only begun, with business depressed, agriculture prostrated, and unemployment general. How well Mr. Harding fulfilled the duties of President under those conditions must be left to history. His friends said that his open mind, his desire for counsel, and the intimate knowledge of the processes of government that he had acquired in his service in the Senate, made him the very man that the Executive position needed at that time.

No one recognized better than did his devoted wife

the mighty work that confronted the President. With such knowledge in mind, she called upon Mrs. Wilson, a short time before the inauguration, to inquire into the details and difficulties of "house-keeping" in the White House. She desired, above all things, that the President should find the same rest and comfort in the Executive Mansion as in his own home in Marion. Mr. Johnson states that this visit to Mrs. Wilson was quite a departure from custom. The oldest attendant could not recall an instance where the wife of a President-elect had called upon the First Lady. But there was a desire on Mrs. Harding's part to understand, so that she might simplify them all as much as possible, certain features of Washington official life which she considered too great a physical strain to be borne without harmful results. To break time-honored customs and establish new ones requires courage and far-seeing judgment, and in these qualities Florence Harding was never deficient.

A citizen of Marion describes her, says Mr. Johnson, as a fine woman. "Nice to everybody. Knows how to run things, too. Runs her house; runs the paper if necessary; runs Warren; runs everything but the car, and she could run that if she wanted to. Florence is all right, she is."

The nation agreed with that judgment when she lay ill in the White House. There was real sorrow over her suffering and real rejoicing at her recovery. But the clouds darkened steadily over the President's head. They were ominous clouds, big with menace for the man who trusted his friends too blindly. Bitter tongues wagged pitilessly—stilled

only for a time by the sudden departure of a kindly soul and the dramatic induction of the next President into office.

“Warren Harding,” said President Hoover, at the dedication of his Memorial Tomb in Marion, Ohio, “had a dim realization that he had been betrayed by a few of the men whom he trusted, by men whom he believed were his devoted friends. It was later proved in the courts of the land that those men had betrayed not only the friendship and trust of their staunch and loyal friend, but they had betrayed their country. That was the tragedy of the life of Warren Harding.”

Yet in the midst of all the gossip and the slander of the time, one is likely to remember best the capable, devoted wife who was always beside him, even to that last scene when Death touched him while she was reading aloud to him.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### CALVIN COOLIDGE

(1923-1929)

THAT silence is golden is a general truth which Calvin Coolidge did not have to learn; he was born with the knowledge, and started every one else talking about it when he was still very young. Even his grandfather, a silent man himself, remarked once to Calvin's father, "Cal don't say much." "No, he ain't gabby," Cal's father had answered, and father and grandfather had smiled at each other. They understood; this little red-haired, freckle-faced boy had come from a race who never wasted words. In the years that followed, one of them lived to see the nation reap a rich benefit from that frugality.

Born to thrift and economy, on July 4th, 1872, in the back room of the general store at Plymouth Notch, Vermont, Calvin took on silence from the surrounding hills as well as from his taciturn, monosyllabic ancestors. He is called by Charles W. Thompson "The Last of the Yankees," and Mr. Thompson says that the only reason Mr. Coolidge, as President, was a mystery to so many twentieth-century Americans is that he is pure Yankee, and that type is an expiring and now unfamiliar race. One has to know New England to know Coolidge; and perhaps in this age, one has to know Coolidge to know New England.

Vermont, two hundred years ago, was pioneered by hunters and trappers—"men who lived by silence," says William Allen White, who states further that farming then, in that State, was a by-product of odd moments when the ground was not frozen. Later it became a farming country, and five generations of Coolidges have grown up among those rocks and wooded hills. Mr. White also claims that the little boy born on Independence Day was no queerer than the average boy in a Vermont village. "He did his chores, herded with his kind, fought and wrestled . . . loved and hated his fellows, and lived in a dream world of childhood very much as any other boy."

Mr. Cameron Rogers states that there were just five people who had any bearing upon the childhood of Calvin Coolidge: his lovely mother, who was Victoria Josephine Moore of that section of Plymouth called "Piney Hollow," his father, his father's parents, and a beautiful small sister, born when he was four years old. Her name was Abigail, and her hair is said to have been not merely red, "but a smashing, glorious red, that by comparison dimmed Calvin's to a discreet ginger." Cal was completely fascinated by his sister. It was not only that she brought warmth and color into the lives of those around her; she shattered silence wherever she went by talking continuously. "She was the one and only talking Coolidge," and the loudly deplored annoyance of her young life was her brother's reticence about things that interested her.

Under the influence of his sister and his grandmother, whom the little girl resembled, and with

whom Calvin lived for most of the time after his grandfather's death, he began to blossom into a very genial boy. But life soon pressed in upon him. Before he was seventeen, three of the dearly loved members of his family were claimed by Death.

First it was his grandfather, who had been his idol—Calvin Galusha Coolidge, a big man, long and lean, with a hard face that had held nothing but kindness and tenderness for his grandson. His lovely mother went next. She had been frail ever since the advent of his sister, Abbie. And now Abbie was his only close companion; he began to regard her with more than common affection. Between these two deaths he attended the little stone schoolhouse at Plymouth, presided over by Miss Ellen Dunbar. Then, at thirteen, one year after his mother's death, his father drove him down the mountain to Ludlow, twelve miles distant, to enroll him as a student at Black River Academy. When the brief formalities of making him a student were over, Calvin's father offered a final word of advice.

"Don't forget, Cal, that you come of landed stock and can pay your way. But it's got to be a mighty sensible way. Don't waste your time or your money. When it's time to come home, just come. It's a nice walk and won't hurt you. I've fixed it so you can come up twice a week."

"Yes, sir," answered the boy, who thereafter never spent any money except for strict necessities. He had been brought up to know its exact value, and how it was acquired. The strict necessities were "city clothes," since none of the students in Ludlow wore homespun clothes. This Calvin explained to

his father on his first trip home. He was allowed to buy "city clothes," but these were carefully put away when he was at home during vacations.

On Sundays he wore his good clothes to Sunday school and church, which he had never missed since he had been large enough to attend. He also wore them when he attended the community dances with Abbie. His attendance at the dances mildly astonished his father, who had seen Calvin in company with girls. Besides, his father was the Notch's leading citizen; he kept the general store, was notary public and deputy sheriff, served in both houses of the State Legislature, and, as constable of forty years' standing, felt himself custodian of the village's morals. His mind was not at ease on the subject of dances; there was a Cavalier smack to them that offended his Roundhead fiber. How Calvin, whom he knew to be clam-like in the presence of all girls except his flame-haired sister, could endure the dances was a puzzle to him.

Calvin, indeed, was "no hand with the girls." In fact, we hear that one or two refused to have a dish of ice-cream with him in Ludlow because he said too little, and because his eyes held a too impersonal light when regarding them. But he did not dislike girls.

And then, when he was seventeen, and was nearing graduation from the Black River Academy, word was brought to him that Abbie was ill. He reached home as quickly as possible, only to find her pale and exhausted in her father's arms, suffering from appendicitis. "In those days," says Rogers, "appendicitis was not curable by a minor operation in



Plymouth Notch, Vermont." So the flame of her life flickered out. This was Calvin's third bereavement. With each one the sheath of his being had grown tougher. He went back to Ludlow after the funeral, but he betrayed none of his great grief to his companions. In June of that year he graduated, and returned home with his father to spend the loneliest summer he had ever known.

This loneliness was to remain almost undiminished until he came to know, more than ten years later, another girl. She was the counterpart of his beloved sister, not in appearance, but in vivaciousness and understanding. She would not have been called vivacious in Plymouth Notch; "likely girl," is the term that would most probably have been used. It was a simple term, but it suggested all that was lovely and desirable in beautiful womanhood.

In the meantime, he studied at Amherst College, after a year's further preparation at St. Johnsbury Academy; then, for twenty months, he read law in the office of Hammond and Field at Northampton, Massachusetts. He was admitted to the bar on Judge Field's motion, and became known as the "poor man's lawyer." But there were men in Northampton who saw in Calvin Coolidge "not the sharp-nosed repository of an infinite and chilling silence," but a sound, responsive youth whom his mother, his grandmother, and his sister had loved for his dependable humanity, and whose odd political habits promised no favors. He joined the Republican City Committee, and was so diligent in his work that he was chosen chairman of the local organization. Soon he was a successful candidate for the

City Council, and presently City Solicitor. After that he became Examiner of titles, and later Clerk of Courts of Hampshire County.

Having, by this time, grown fairly prosperous, he began to feel that it was a duty to himself to find a wife. Then Fate took a hand. Miss Grace Anna Goodhue began to pass beneath his boarding house window every morning, on her way to the school for the deaf and dumb, where she was a teacher. The story goes that Calvin had hung his shaving mirror on the window casing one morning, that he might get a better light to shave by. While he was raking off the foamy lather, his mirror reflected the image of a girl who was passing on the street below, with rhythmic step and head gracefully poised. The downward sweep of the razor was arrested, and Calvin craned his neck. His roommate was so astonished that he stared at Calvin, who remarked, "Likely girl going up the street."

"What's her name?" asked the roommate.

"Don't know," was the reply, and Calvin went on with his shaving. But the next morning, when he saw her pass beneath his window again, he pointed her out to his roommate. This was fortunate, as the roommate was a steward at the school for the deaf, and knew the young lady. He told Calvin that he would introduce him to her at the first opportunity, and he made the opportunity by inviting Miss Goodhue to the boarding house for supper. It is recorded that Coolidge became an ardent wooer; yet it taxes one's imagination somewhat to fancy a man, so naturally silent, in the rôle of Romeo. He did, however, add to his regular routine of life a scheduled

attendance upon Miss Goodhue, observed with interest by his roommate, Mr. Robert Weir, and by others. Mr. Weir said that the young lady, having taught the deaf to hear, must aspire to the triumph of making the mute speak.

Miss Goodhue was born in Burlington, Vermont, and graduated from the State University. She is said to have been one of the brightest and most popular students of her college. Following her graduation, she went to Northampton to teach, and quickly made a wide circle of friends. Her sunny disposition, her grace of person, and her loveliness of countenance, of which candor was a leading characteristic, made her a winning personality. She and her quiet suitor came to be called "a study in opposites," and none of her many other admirers gave much heed to the competition of Calvin Coolidge. "They pointed out with justice that socially he was a washout," says Mr. Rogers, who also relates that they felt secure, as he had no small talk and his conversation upon any subject bloomed, like the edelweiss, rarely and in a cold, forbidding atmosphere. "He could never be said to break hearts like teacups, or waltz like a leaf upon the wind," but no one considered that he could enjoy watching Grace waltz. None of them had ever heard of the sister he had loved to watch dance. It did seem to most people that this quiet, unobtrusive man should have chosen for a life partner a person of his own type.

Most of Calvin Coolidge's courting was done in Northampton, but he and Miss Goodhue made occasional trips to Burlington to visit the latter's

parents. The only criticism they made of Grace's beau was that he was austere and uncommunicative. It is reported that on one visit he told Mr. Goodhue that he intended to marry Grace.

"Does she know it?" asked the startled father, full of interest.

"No," replied Calvin, "but she will."

They were married on the fourth of October, 1905. It was truly a home wedding, in the modest parlor of the Goodhues in Burlington, with only the members of the family present. They spent a week in Montreal on their honeymoon, and then returned to Northampton, where they lived that first winter in a furnished apartment. The following spring they moved into half of a double house on Massasoit Street, where they remained until they were called to the White House.

Calvin's father approved the marriage, and congratulations poured in upon the couple and their families. The next year, Mr. Coolidge was nominated for the Legislature. The bystanders were already watching this silent man; they had been watching him, in fact, ever since he mounted the first rung of the ladder as common councilman. After two sessions of the Legislature, he returned to Northampton and was twice elected Mayor. This ended Mr. Coolidge's career in city politics. He was ready and willing now, if the people desired, to begin political activities in a larger field. The people did so desire, and in 1912 he was elected State Senator. Two years later he became president of that body, and delivered the shortest inaugural speech on record, for such an occasion.

“Do the day’s work. If it be to protect the rights of the weak, whoever objects, do it. If it be to help a powerful corporation to serve the people, whatever the opposition, do that. Expect to be called a standpatter, but don’t be a standpatter. Expect to be called a demagogue, but don’t be a demagogue. Don’t hesitate to be as reactionary as the multiplication table. Give Administration a chance to catch up with Legislation.” And from the moment he took the gavel in hand he was in complete command of the Senate. Another notable speech that Mr. Coolidge made while in the Senate was even shorter than the above, and more to the point. It was in reply to a colleague who differed with him upon a bill under discussion. That Senator discussed the bill at great length, prefacing each argument with, “It is.” Mr. Coolidge rose to refute, and said clearly but dejectedly, as though the talk had wearied him, “Mr. Speaker: It isn’t,” and then sat down.

“His brevity could be steeled with authority, and as trenchant as an ax blade,” says Rogers. “He could write to his house chairman of the Committee on Railroads, touching the chairman’s attitude on the bill before him, ‘Sand your tracks; you’re slipping,’ and expect results.” From the Senate he went into the office of Lieutenant Governor, and in that position, as in all the others he had filled, he did his work so well that he became the unopposed candidate of his party for Governor of Massachusetts in 1918.

“How did he do it?” cried the politicians. They began to speak of “Coolidge luck.” “But the Vermont hills do not breed a dependence on luck,” says James Morgan. Our answer is that Coolidge



*Photo by Harris & Ewing, Washington, D.C.*

GRACE GOODHUE COOLIDGE  
(*Mrs. Calvin Coolidge*)



never played; he never played at the Notch, or at Ludlow, or at Amherst; and he worked as hard at law as he had worked in the hay field, helping his father. The people began to get an inkling of his capacity when the Boston police strike occurred, shortly after he became Governor. That event created a sort of mythical Coolidge—a strong, silent, indomitable creature who dramatically saved New England from anarchy, and put the labor unions in what the popular minds of the day deemed their proper places, as Mr. White observes. “There is no right to strike against public safety by anybody, anywhere, at any time,” was the answer to the president of the American Federation of Labor, which challenged public attention from coast to coast and caused a thrill of admiration throughout the land. “What he did or did not do about the police strike still may be a subject of dispute,” says James Morgan, “but no one questions that what he said about it made Coolidge President.”

It undoubtedly made him Vice-President. But that office is recognized as a political sidetrack, a definite relegation to obscurity, out of ambition's way. It had not run true to form in Roosevelt's case; and now, Fate again took a hand. The news of President Harding's death in California flashed across the continent, and the oath of office was administered to Coolidge in a homely farmhouse, by the light of a kerosene lamp. Calvin Coolidge, the man who had worn homespun clothes to the village school, who had climbed slowly, deliberately up the political ladder, gathering wisdom as he climbed, was sworn into the highest office in the land by his father.



All the gravity of his Puritan ancestors settled on his lined face and straightened his silent figure, as he placed his hand upon the Bible and solemnly added to the prescribed oath: "So help me God." It was the strangest presidential inauguration in all history, yet somehow appropriate.

His first official act was to dictate a brief statement to the nation; his next was to send a telegram to Mrs. Harding, expressing the sympathy of himself and Mrs. Coolidge in her bereavement. But before leaving his native hills for the capital, he turned aside from the functions of the moment and from the press correspondents who had raced through the night to reach him, and visited alone the graves of his mother and of his sister. Those who looked across the field to the little cemetery on his grandfather's place saw him standing with hat removed before two small headstones. "He had taken it all to them—the glory and honor and the dread that gripped his heart," says Mr. White. Then slowly he came back, joined his wife, said good-bye to his father, and walked past the reporters into his new life.

It is told that not even in her most fanciful dreams of courtship days had Grace Anna Goodhue imagined that she was to marry a man who, in less than twenty years, would be President of the United States. Yet she, who had done all her own work in the Massasoit Street home in Northampton, graced her high position as the nation's hostess with a singular charm. She brought to the White House her two sons, manly lads, with their mother's high spirits and their father's steadiness—boys whom she

had taught the value of honesty, truthfulness, and valor. And as mistress of the White House, she was called upon in less than a year to part with her younger son. The whole nation grieved with President and Mrs. Coolidge when Calvin, Jr., who is said to have believed in his father as men do in natural laws, died of blood poisoning. Grief etched the silent man's face with rugged lines and touched his temples with gray, but he bore it with his usual stoicism, sustained by the courage of his brave wife, who alone understood the sorrow he concealed.

Mr. Coolidge believes that every office, however great or small, is an office maintained for the service of the public, and therefore should receive a man's best endeavor. Accordingly, he brought to his administration the desire to perform every duty, however great or small, with the same painstaking care.

He did not become a statesman, we are told, but with amazing speed he did become a notable and able executive, under whom the country prospered as it had never prospered before. And the principle that controlled this happy era was that which had always controlled the life actions of President Coolidge; it was the principle of constructive economy. Each year of his tenure of office demonstrated the peculiar rightness of that principle.

The social attributes denied to Mr. Coolidge are doubly vested in his wife. She has drawn to his life much of color and of happiness; and, in so doing, it is said, she has "interpreted that seemingly uninterpretable man to the American people," thereby winning for herself the position of the most admired woman in all our official history.

## CHAPTER XXX

### HERBERT CLARK HOOVER

(1929- )

MR. HOOVER came to the Presidency a world citizen, one who had been, for fourteen years, devoted to public service. Before that time he was a mining engineer, and had traveled over the entire globe, taking American methods into the farthest parts of the earth.

Born in West Branch, Iowa, August 10, 1874, in a one-story cottage across the alley from his father's blacksmith shop, Herbert Clark Hoover, second child of Jesse and Huldah Minthorn Hoover, became an incessant wanderer at the age of ten. From that time on he was to have no permanent abiding place until, thirty-three years later, he entered the service of the Federal Government in the District of Columbia. This wandering had ancestral momentum behind it. He was of pioneer stock; one of his forebears, an Andrew Hoover, had pioneered from Maryland to North Carolina before the Revolution. Andrew's son, John, joined a Quaker trek and settled near Miami, Ohio, before the War of 1812. Before the Civil War, Jesse, the next head of the family, "with his son Eli, and Eli's brood, packed themselves into a covered wagon and emigrated to the unbroken prairie lands of Iowa," says Mr. Will Irwin.

Mr. William Hard tells us that in the case of each of these pioneers, the change was not merely to a new region, but resulted in the actual creation of a new settlement, a new community, a new focus of human habitation. The focus was a Friends' meeting-house and a village entirely inhabited by Friends. To Friends there is just one career open to an orphan—friendly care by relatives and by members of the meeting, and labor well performed by the orphan. The Society of Friends believes in helpfulness and self-help. To them, idleness is not only waste but sin. Therefore Herbert Hoover was brought up to work. His parents had caused him to work in and about the cottage in which he was born, and he had worked on his Uncle Allen's farm, which was his first home after his parents' death. Then he worked as errand boy and general chore boy in Newberg, Oregon, where another uncle, Dr. John Minthorn, was engaged in establishing a Friends' colony, with its meeting-house and its academy. He next worked in a real estate office in Salem, when his uncle merged his own development with the Oregon Land Company.

It was from Salem that Hoover went to Stanford University at Palo Alto, California, to study mining engineering. He was forced to work his way and was given a job as acting clerk to the registrar. Then, in succession, he secured the contract for delivering the San Francisco newspapers on the campus, obtained a laundry agency, and became part-time secretary to Professor Branner. Between his sophomore and junior years, Dr. Branner placed him with the United States Geological Survey. Thus

Hoover continued to work until his graduation in May, 1895.

"No student who walked the shadowy arcades of Stanford ever left behind him so deep an imprint on the life and traditions of the university," says Irwin. College brought much into Herbert Hoover's lonely life. Lonely it had been since the abrupt ending of his childhood visit, with his brother, to his Uncle Benajah, who one day tucked them into a cutter and drove them home, where they found their father dead of typhoid fever. It was lonelier still, four years later, when his brave, spiritual mother died, and he was separated from his brother, Theodore, and his baby sister, May. That scene may have come back to him the summer he left Stanford for his last months of work with the Geological Survey, but there was no sadness in his eyes then. There was, instead, a deep yearning in his heart and an eagerness for the future.

For Stanford had not only brought into his life much in the way of learning, and a fellowship that had transformed him into the most respected leader and organizer of all the student body. It had brought that subtler thing that motivates the whole life of man.

In Hoover's senior year there came to Stanford Lou Henry, a young and beautiful girl, who had been drawn there by Dr. Branner's lectures in a university extension course at Monterey, where she lived. As a high-school senior, she had been fascinated by the mysteries in the bowels of the earth, as set forth by Dr. Branner in his extension lectures; and she was the first girl to enter the geology class

at Stanford. Mr. Irwin says that Miss Henry, in her university days, was slim and as supple as a reed; her face was of a beautiful structure, regular and delicate, yet firm; and her wealth of brown hair was coiled about her head, fillet fashion. He first noticed her, he says, for her horsemanship as much as for her beauty; for she was often seen riding a horse, hired from a livery stable at Palo Alto.

She had no sooner settled to her laboratory work than she began to hear about Hoover, the brilliant senior, whose original work the entire geology department was trying to imitate. "It was Hoover this and Hoover that . . ." but she, being a mere freshman, had no hope of meeting him. "Then one day," says Irwin, "Dr. Branner was discussing with her some new specimens in a cabinet. 'Hoover brought them in from the field,' he said. 'They've been called carboniferous, but I'll eat my hat if they aren't precarboniferous. Isn't that your opinion, Hoover?'" And Miss Henry looked up to see standing near them a "lean, immature-looking boy," not at all resembling her mental picture of the great senior. Dr. Branner left them, while they talked of the carboniferous period. Irwin claims that the outstanding trait of Hoover's personality was shyness; yet, one evening, shortly after that conversation, he dressed in his best suit and called at Roble Hall, where Miss Henry was living.

Besides biology, these two soon found they were interested in many things in common. Miss Henry had been born in Iowa, as had Hoover; her father, Charles Delano Henry, had been a banker in the small town of Waterloo until the severe winters had

caused her mother to develop a chronic cough, which was feared to be tuberculous. A mild, dry climate was recommended, and the Henrys moved to Los Angeles; yet Mrs. Henry's cough did not improve until they discovered Monterey. There, "amid the gnome-like cypresses and adobe houses of that old Spanish capital, Lou Henry grew to womanhood."

From the first call that Herbert Hoover made at Roble Hall, the friendship of the two went steadily forward. When he left Stanford they had reached a sweet and promising understanding. Hoover had almost no money, says Irwin, and after finishing his final summer's work with the United States Geological Survey, he traveled on the last of the funds to Nevada City. There, in the center of the romantic Bret Harte region, he took a laborer's job, receiving \$2.50 a day for his services. For practical experience, "but mostly because I had to eat," he said later, he pounded a drill, shoveled ore, and pushed a hand-car for eight hours a day. During his free hours he sometimes loafed about the Nevada City Hotel, picking up information on mining from any one who could supply it. He was told that Janin was the outstanding technical mining engineer of the day, and he made up his mind to take the little money he had saved from his pay and go to San Francisco to ask Janin for a job.

The story of Herbert Hoover's advancement in engineering, from the time he became an apprentice on Janin's staff, is well known. Australia came next, then China, India, and many other countries. But to his second big job he did not go alone. Hoover had asked his sweetheart to marry him when



*Photo by Harris & Ewing, Washington, D.C.*

LOU HENRY HOOVER  
(Mrs. Herbert C. Hoover)





he had been placed on Janin's staff. But Miss Henry had not completed her university course at the time, and she disliked giving up anything she had undertaken until it was finished. Her A.B. degree was won while Hoover was in Australia in 1898. She was awaiting his return, when a cablegram arrived, asking if she would go with him to China. She now readily consented. So, on February 10, 1899, they were married in the home of the Henrys by Father Ramon Mestre, who had a dispensation from his church to marry non-Catholics, there being no Protestant churches in Monterey. They immediately took a train for San Francisco, and sailed on that same day for China.

The journey over, Mr. Hoover reported at Peking and went to work at once on his new job. From this base he traveled far, going into the provinces of Manchuria, Mongolia, Chihli, Shantung, and Shansi. "Sometimes he crawled by canal boat, sometimes on horseback with the paraphernalia of living following in carts or on pack-mules," says Irwin. But no matter how he traveled, his young bride usually traveled with him. Her letters to her folks sparkled with quaint details of her strange honeymoon days, spent prying into the secrets of the earth in places where, frequently, the inhabitants had never before seen a white woman.

The winter made further explorations impossible, so the Hoovers moved to a rented house in Tientsin, where Mrs. Hoover acted as first assistant to her husband while he wrote the report of his summer's work. All the time, we are told, Mr. Hoover's eager, curious mind took notes not only of the mineral

wealth of China but of the human wealth also—of the government and its rich history. He began a unique collection of books, in many languages, on China and the Chinese, which afterward, as a gift from him, became the valued nucleus of the Chinese Library of Stanford University. "That winter they dined back and forth with European residents of Tientsin, or went up to Peking to visit with the 'diplomatic set'; and Hoover began his education in the seamy side of international intrigue."

They were in Tientsin the next summer, during the Boxer Rebellion, and Mrs. Hoover's courage and helpfulness never failed her husband from the moment the fire-bell began to sound its rapid tocsin, causing the entire foreign colony of six hundred to run to the Town Hall, dragging their children after them. When rifle bullets began to strike the walls surrounding the houses, and shells began to burst in the street, Mrs. Hoover, taking into consideration the location of their home, realized they were comparatively safe, and indulged in no hysteria. The fighting settled down to a three weeks' siege, and she reported to the doctor for first-aid service before the volunteer corps began bringing in the human wrecks. As many as two hundred victims were often brought in a day. When the temporary hospital ran short of supplies, Mrs. Hoover raided the meagerly stocked general stores to get cotton goods for dressings, then commandeered domestic sheets from all the inhabitants of Tientsin, as well as from her own supply. When the professional surgeons arrived and took over the hospital, Mrs. Hoover was urgently requested to stay. But she, having a house full of

war correspondents by that time, wanted all the leisure she could take from outside occupations to look after her household.

With the Boxer uprising, foreign occupation in northeastern China received a severe blow; and the big job on which Hoover had built so many hopes no longer existed. Yet, before he could start on his return for California, he was approached by a German financial agent for a large coal mining company; and in their interest, he and Mrs. Hoover went to Europe. There he quickly made a tour of the capitals, successfully bending the bondholders to the financial agent's wishes regarding his coal mining company. Then he returned to California, prepared to start life anew. Destiny, however, ordered otherwise, and in 1900 he went back to China as chief engineer of a reorganized mining company and settled at Tong Shan.

Soon his journeys began to cover the world "from the equator to the arctic," says Irwin, with always the home port at San Francisco. By that time Herbert Hoover, Jr., was ready for school, and more and more time was being spent at the home base. They had two sons, the younger of whom was named Allan. It was their wish that both children be educated in California, though Mrs. Hoover liked travel and accompanied her husband whenever her children's education permitted. When his actual work was too remote or too rough, as in Ceylon, the Malay Peninsula, or Siberia, she established herself in the nearest civilized center and waited. Mr. Irwin says that in the period of far-flung activities between 1901 and 1914 the Hoovers boarded an ocean liner

as casually as most people take a trolley-car to their daily occupation.

At the outbreak of the World War, Mr. Hoover, then in Europe, organized an agency for the return of stranded Americans. The odd task is said to have come to him naturally; then, quite as naturally, though not at all through his own seeking, he found himself in charge of feeding a nation. The world knows how well Mr. Hoover organized a scientific distribution of food and clothes which sustained ten million Belgians and Frenchmen for four and a half years. It cost nearly a billion and a half dollars—and he raised the money himself. “As an achievement it stands alone,” says Samuel Crowther.

With the coming of the Armistice, Mr. Hoover received many dazzling offers, through which he might quickly have amassed large fortunes; but he considered that the Government had an obligation to the American farmers. Without a penny of salary, without even his traveling expenses, he went to Europe to find markets for the American farmers’ products. Mr. Crowther says that any one who will read the public documents and correspondence between our government and the other governments, concerning the lowering of the blockade, will find there the pleadings of Herbert Hoover for the American farmers and for the feeding of those who were starving in Central Europe.

During and after the World War, Mr. Hoover carried forward, with complete success, more important tasks than any other one man. He organized and directed the feeding of more human beings than any other man in history, and therefore he has

saved more lives. Statistics show that in the eight years he served in the Department of Commerce, he brought that once obscure division of the Government to the point of saving the country nearly a billion dollars a year. It may be added that this Department was promoting trade to an extent almost impossible to estimate, when he was nominated for President.

Thus Mr. Hoover came to the Presidency of the United States not only as a world citizen, but as a coördinator, an executive, an administrator, and an eliminator of waste and folly. Mr. Irwin says that engineers do not honor their own, save for eminence and service in their calling. That the American Society of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers has conferred on Mr. Hoover its gold medal, and the American Institute of Engineers its presidency, are undisputed symbols of his standing. Quietly he rose to the top of his profession, and quietly he rose to the highest political office in the country.

Nor did Mrs. Hoover enter the White House any less eminently fitted for her position as nation's hostess than was her husband for Chief Executive. In fact, no other First Lady was ever more socially experienced or finely equipped. Her lifelong habit of abundant outdoor exercise has brought her to the full blossom of her maturity with a strong, sound body and a mentality that never flags. She is said to take her place in every crowd as its veritable leader, wearing her lovely white hair as one wears a crown, and drawing the eyes of all in spite of her lack of effort to do so. "Tremendous vitality and the marks of deep thought are in her pale, intelligent face.

Earnestness, capability, and wisdom are perhaps her outstanding characteristics," says a writer in the *Literary Digest*.

As a hostess, Mrs. Hoover presides over both State and private functions with an easy grace seldom equaled in Washington officialdom; and she is especially gifted with a sense that understands which guests belong together and will interest each other. She remembers a face long after her husband has forgotten it, and rarely forgets the correct name to attach to it. Her controlling impulse is to help and second her husband in every undertaking, even to the petty incidents of their daily life, such as the filling in of conversational gaps when entertaining; for she has a flow of small talk and anecdotes that he has not.

Mr. Frederick Collins states, in an article on the present First Lady, that if an artist were asked to paint a portrait of the ideal mistress of the White House, he could do no better than take Mrs. Hoover for his model. In most things she is the feminine counterpart of her husband, but she is also a wise mother and companion to her boys. She is "always a Girl Scout," as she herself declares; and this is no idle boast, for her younger son pronounces her "better than most men in camp." In an article by Janet Mabie, we are told that Mrs. Hoover has carried her comradeship a generation further and is the perfect playmate for her grandchildren, the three lovely spirits of youth who lived at the White House while their father was recuperating from an illness in the hills of South Carolina. Peggy Ann, Herbert III, and even baby Joan learned the most fascinating

games from grandmother, taught, of course, in the only way grandmother approves—by actually engaging in the playing herself. There was snowballing, for instance, which the children never experienced until they came East from California. At the first snowfall they were bundled into the White House automobile and taken to Rock Creek Park, where, in a little cove, their grandmother taught them to snowball. And they learned that the largest part of the fun in snowballing was not at all in aiming straight, but in the tumbling, the rolling, and the laughter.

One can readily understand how well qualified was the President to sum up the spirit of childhood as he did in 1930, before twelve hundred delegates to the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection. He said, in part:

“ We approach all problems of childhood with affection. Theirs is the province of joy and good humor. They are the most wholesome of the race, the sweetest, for they are fresher from God. Whimsical, ingenious, mischievous, we live a life of apprehension as to what their opinion may be of us, a life of defense against their terrifying energy; we put them to bed with a sense of relief and a lingering devotion. We envy them the freshness of adventure and discovery of life; we mourn over the disappointments they will meet.”

Here are five sentences that, for beauty and truth, will live forever among the important utterances of men. No man could thus come upon the magical secret of childhood who had not long possessed the



companionship, the warmth, and the understanding of a parent's heart.

Not since Mr. Roosevelt's day, it is said, has the nation had a President who formed so many contacts or was interested in so many different kinds of people as is Mr. Hoover. Never has there been a President's wife whose tastes and experiences so closely paralleled those of her husband as do Mrs. Hoover's.

There could be no more fitting conclusion to this brief study of the romances that have sweetened the lives of our Presidents. There is something that is intensely American in this mating, for it is based not alone on passion but on intellectual and spiritual comradeship as well. Such romance will stand the wear and tear of everyday life. It is not the sugary imitation of love that so quickly palls, but, as the French would say, "good as bread," the very staff of life.

THE END





